

**For space is dark
... and full of terrors**



NEW HORIZON
Scenario Pack MV

NEW HORIZON

Scenario Pack MV2.0

New Horizon is a game about humanity's spread into our solar system and the horrors we discover as we go there. It is an exciting mix of Blade Runner universe, Aliens movies, Lovecraftian horror and hard science-fiction.

The scope of New Horizon is contained to a fantastical setting that is still familiar to us – our solar system, from Mercury out to the frontier of the Kuiper Belt. Earth is still the center of the universe, home to all mankind, but millions of people dwell in colonies and space stations spread throughout the solar system and beyond. Spaceships travel between the worlds, using technology that propels them from world to world in a matter of weeks or months, instead of years.

Despite the fact that the nations of the solar system are united in a way never before thought possible, the vast distances that separate the colonies of humanity create a sense of isolation. The journeys through the black are long and lonely. There are many who find this isolation difficult to deal with, especially given the things that now roam in the dark.

Horror takes many forms. It is the uncertainty of survival, the suspense of finding malevolent things among the stars, and fear of the unknown. It is the dread of facing Things That Should Not Be, the revulsion when encountering alien things, and the sickening realization of the wrong and ghastly things that humans are capable of doing to themselves and each other. Horror also arises both from the comprehension that there are scary things beyond our understanding inhabiting our universe and that humanity may be its own worst enemy. Despite all of the technological tools and advances available, they still face terrors like losing control of their own identities, their perceptions, and their mental faculties— not to mention their future as a species.

New Horizon is a couple hundred years into the future. In terms of its influences, the setting is approximately equivalent to the technology presented in such movies as Total Recall, After Earth, Outland, Starship Trooper, Avatar, Elysium, Predator, Doom, Pandorum, Event Horizon or The Expanse TV series.



FOR MATURE AUDIENCES ONLY
This book is intended for mature readers. It contains
dark and disturbing content and images.
Reader discretion is advised.

DISCLAIMER: This is a collaborative and open source fan-made creative exercise and has not been created for profit or commercial use. The game is intended for entertainment purposes only and is for private use. The texts describing the world of New Horizon are shameless plagiarisms of the Cthulhu Rising website. All logos, names, pictures and texts are registered trademarks and/or copyrights of their respective trademark and copyright holders.

Merchant Venturer

A New Horizon scenario pack for mercenary adventurers.

Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	1
CAMPAIGN DOCUMENT.....	2
CALAMITY.....	13
EREBUS.....	29
FATE OF THE TERRA ARAE.....	48

INTRODUCTION

BOOK STRUCTURE

If you are intending to play in this campaign starter pack, please do not read any further! From here on, this book is for the Keeper's eyes only.

The Merchant Venturer campaign (MV01 & MV02) was first published in spring and winter 2008 on the now defunct Cthulhu Rising website. The scenario pack is set in the Herculis Cluster, rules by the Free World Alliance (FWA), especially in the Wolf 635 system.

Campaign Document

The guideline to starting up the Merchant Venturer Campaign. The background for the Herculis Cluster, Occupations list, basic equipment and game stats for the Merchant Venturer and other vehicles are provided.

Calamity (MV01)

The adventure starts with a plea for a job from a local fixer and gangster based in the city of New Respite. If they respond, they will soon be drawn into a struggle for the control of contraband.

Erebus (MV02)

The players have to reveal the truth about the disappearance of the Erebus, a heavy troop transporter that mysteriously vanished during the Colonial Wars. However, high personalities will stop at nothing to prevent the discovery of their involvement in the Erebus tragedy.

Fate of Terra Arae (MV03)

As players explore Terra Arae, they gradually piece together the puzzle of its destiny. Their investigations lead them to face the challenges posed by a criminal organization in a fight to the death for survival.

Merchant Venturer has three scenarios that can be played as stand-alone adventures or played sequentially as a campaign. All the scenarios take place in the Binary system of Wolf 635 and the city of Calamity. Note that these are for mature audiences and some of the topics may be disturbing to certain players. Feel free to modify them to fit your playgroup.

RUNNING THIS SCENARIO PACK

The way that text is sometimes presented in a descriptive form may have some keepers thinking that this scenario needs to be run in a linear manner, with situations, and investigator reactions preordained. This

is not the case. If the players do something that alters, or makes a scene impossible, the keeper must then adjust the Players' Information accordingly. However, it is true that these descriptive paragraphs of player information can lend themselves to a simple approach to running the adventure, allowing for almost immediate use after the book has been read. After all, some keepers aren't fortunate enough to have the hours of spare time necessary to prepare their ideal campaign,

What is important, is that this is your scenario and it can be presented with as much, or as little information as desired. We feel that the aura of a sometimes impenetrable mystery is an important factor. But keepers may wish to display would-be hidden intimacies in any way they deem appropriate. There will be times where the plot may be overwhelming the players: this is fine as long as the keeper is not confused, and as long as everyone is enjoying themselves.

Throughout the story, there are points where the keeper will have to refer to their New Horizon core rule book for technical data. Because of differences in varying versions of the game, there are no page numbers listed. However, keepers will most likely be familiar enough with the game to find the necessary information. But if not, don't spend vital minutes of time uncomfortably flipping through pages in silence, looking for a particular rule. If you can't find something straight away, just improvise and relax yourself—not the atmosphere you have spent hours creating.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

Having read through the scenario pack and gained a good understanding of the key plot and characters, the Keeper is advised to prepare each adventure prior to play. Highlight key headers and sections in the text and, perhaps, prepare memory-jogger notes of the key events, which can be referred to during play.

NPC statistics and monster profiles are gathered together at the close of each of the chapters for ease of reference. It's a good idea to copy/ print these sections out onto separate pages, allowing the Keeper to have them near at hand for quick referral and to avoid flicking back and forth through the book. Likewise, printing out the portraits of the key NPCs to show the players (perhaps sticking these on to cards or on a convenient wall next to the gaming table) may help the players to differentiate the cast of allies and villains as they go through the adventures.

CAMPAIGN DOCUMENT

by Garry Cooper

This document is a guide to starting up the Merchant Venturer Campaign. It is meant only as a guideline and not as an authoritative text. The first section deals with game setup, occupations and ship ownership. The game is set in the troubled Herculis Cluster and game background for this area of space is provided in this text. Finally there is a section on the basic equipment available to the players and game stats for the Merchant Venturer and other vehicles.

"Traders? Pah! Trader could mean anything out here in the Cluster, boy! From space bums that fly tin coffins to pirates, thieves, bounty hunters, taxi boys and even the odd hero. Hell, boy, the average free traders been all of the above at some point in their sorry assed lives."

Tom Ridgley, Trader and captain of The Mako.

THE PLAYERS

"Does my crew scare the UEF? No idea. But they sure scare the shit out me!"

Captain Helena Kanter, Captain of the infamous pirate ship Scorpion.

The players are the crew of the Merchant Venturer an aging Caravel Class vessel plying its trade out on the Herculis Cluster. The crew have a trading licence granted by the UEF, and form part of the large and amorphous trading community of "free traders" that operates out on the rim of the UEF. A group of people that take whatever cargo run they can, move from job to job and often live hand to mouth. Rogues, thieves, heroes and pirates make up this community of fiercely independent souls.

As a group most, or all (keepers discretion) of the players have a percentage share in ownership of the Merchant Venturer. The captain of the ship has the marginally larger percentage. The captain should be one of the players, and not an NPC, to insure that all characters can get fully involved in the game. The precise nature of the percentage share will depend on the group size.

It's assumed (though not necessary) that most of the crew have been working together for some time, and any back stories, or history, can be worked out prior to the game.

RECOMMEND OCCUPATIONS

Below is a list of occupation classes that could fit easily into this game. However, it is also possible that a player may be an Ex police officer, marine, etc and may have the relevant skills to reflect this.

Where an occupation class is bolded it is recommend that at least one player takes this role in the campaign,

or at least takes some skills from that class. Though on board trading ships it's not uncommon for crew members to be skilled in a variety of roles.

Recommended Occupations list

- Criminal (Either as smuggler, or a fairly accurate description of how the UEF view "independent traders.") Possibly with a record, false Id or even a bounty on their heads.
- Doctor of Medicine. (Someone's got to heal the wounds.)
- Drifter. (May have got a job aboard The Merchant Venturer as a means to travel the stars.)
- Engineer, Space.
- Pilot (Aerospace/Interstellar) Quite useful. ☺
- Punk. Maybe some kid desperate to get off some backwater rock, or running from something?
- Separatist. Perhaps a FWA sympathiser working aboard ship, maybe with a record and/or wanted by the UEF?
- Soldier (Ex) An ex-marine, or even an Ex FWA soldier, making a living as security.



COLSPEAK

"Nee how, yor Silver Damala. Moja!" Says gun waving goon No 1.

"What he say?" Says confused Earther No 1.

"He said: give him your money or he'll shot you." Says helpful gun waving goon No 2.

A Fairly recent phenomenon in the Outer Rim Territories, Colspeak or simply 'The Speak' is a hybrid of English, Spanish Mandarin and some Russian pidgin spoken by some colonists as a form of communication. If no common language exists and access to Translation hardware / software is limited. It is a 'working language', in that its structure and purpose is not given for abstract conversations of any real depth. There is no written form of this language and many linguists debate if it is a language or a pure pidgin tongue. It is often used by traders for business and the criminal classes to hide their intent.

For players characters born out in the Colonies assume an INT x2 base chance for the language if they are from the "wrong side of the tracks, or a family with a trading background. Otherwise INT x1. Those new to the outer rim and the Herculis Cluster will have to 00% base chance, and will need to add points during roll up if they want this skill.



Salaries/Money

"Business is business, take nothing personal. Always keep a buck in your sight, and learn to live with the fact that sometimes a partner becomes a competitor."

Captain Robertson, smuggler.

"Traders don't like paying taxes, the UEF don't like people who don't pay their taxes, and that's why the two don't get along."

Captain Robertson, smuggler.

As the crew are independent operators, that all own a share in the ship, they do not collect a normal pay cheque, but a cut of the profits. Money can be tight at

times and personal wealth is very dependent on how well the last deal went. To begin the game roll up finances as normal, but future profits depend on the player's success.

THE HERCULIS CLUSTER

"The Cluster is one of the jewels in a trader's life. The good old United Earth's too damn picky in its company and won't trade with the freeworlders. But hell! I'm a friendly all inclusive kind of guy, and I'll trade with anyone. Especially if that means I don't get no UEF import duties or, for that matter, FWA ones."

Captain Robertson, smuggler and captain of The Free Spirit.

The Herculis Cluster refers to a sector of space with a high concentration of resource-rich and habitable star systems in close proximity to each other, approximately 25 light years Core-ward from Sol. The Herculis Cluster had been a relatively autonomous zone ever since the collapse of EnerTek, the company that funded the majority of the region's colonisation projects. EnerTek's assets were frozen during ensuing investigation, and the Herculis Cluster was allowed a degree of regional autonomy by the ICA to self-govern, a decision that is now regretted in the corridors of power on Earth.

EnerTek's colonial assets were acquired by the Hallidor Corporation in 2254. Many people believe that it was this mega corporation's over eagerness to gain access to the abundant natural resources in the Herculis Cluster that fanned the flames of sedition and indirectly brought about the Colonial Wars Of 2258-2260.

Civil unrest in the colonies of the Herculis Cluster continues to this day. Since the ceasefire of 2260, the rebel colonies of the Free Worlds Alliance that lie in the Herculis Cluster have been blockaded both economically and militarily by the United Earth Federation. Despite this, a healthy black market exists.

Important Dates

- 2198** Rival corporations Hallidor, Cheung and EnerTek gain lucrative colonisation contracts for a cluster of star systems in the Herculis Cluster. EnerTek is seen as getting cream of the crop, leading to accusations of bribery of UEF officials.
- 2213** Pirate activity becomes a more organised threat in the Outer Rim Territories. The two main pirate groups operate in the Herculis Cluster and in the Rimworlds Colonies.
- 2246** EnerTek Corp goes bust. During the following decade most of its colonial assets are effectively abandoned – left to fend for themselves, leading to a deep-seated resentment of both corporate and centralised Earth control.
- 2254** Hallidor acquires EnerTek's colonial assets

and attempts to exert stricter controls over its new property.

2255 Eli Navarro, a colonial administrator from the fledgling Nuevo Santiago colony in the 18 Scorpii star systems leads a delegation of representatives from colonies in the Herculis Cluster to petition the UEF General Assembly for continued regional autonomy. The controlling political party in the General Assembly – the Centralist/Neo-Federalist Alliance – is staunchly anti-separatist and rejects the petition.

2257: Colonial Sedition Civil unrest in the Herculis Cluster grows, and on the larger colonies the protests turn into riots as separatist-supporting colonists clash with ColSec troops. Separatists led by Eli Navarro take control of the ICA office on Nuevo Santiago, declaring independence from Earth rule. Other colonies in the Herculis Cluster quickly follow suit, rallying to Navarro's cause. Large numbers of the ColSec and corporate garrisons, many with families and some born and raised on worlds light years from Earth, defect to join the separatists.

2258-2260: The Colonial Wars The Colonial Wars are fought primarily on two fronts: the Herculis Front lays Coreward of Sol and comprises the star systems that would become the Free Worlds Alliance (FWA); the Rimworlds Front lays Rimward of Sol and comprises those star systems that would become the Eurasian Rimworlds Combine (ERC).

The war rages for three years, during which time the UEF wage economic and military warfare against the rebels, and sees fighting on a score of worlds in over a dozen star systems. Some colonies capitulate quickly and with little loss of life. Others turn into protracted and bloody campaigns claiming thousands of lives, such as Vega, Delta Eridani and the disastrous Ixion invasion.

2260: Ceasefire Casualties continue to mount, as public support for the war continues to fall. Anti-war protests on Mars turn violent, and the Mars garrison has to be mobilised to quell the riots.

When an ERC suicide mission succeeds in penetrating defences at Omicron² Eridani and cripples a UEAF taskforce orbiting Eridanus with great loss of life, voices inside the General Assembly begin to call for a negotiated ceasefire with both groups of rebels. On 1st May 2260, thanks in part to the negotiating skills of the Chrislamic Church, an uneasy ceasefire is established with both of the remaining pockets of rebellion. No peace treaty is signed with either group.

Blockaded by the UEF, the separatist colonies in the Herculis Cluster declare themselves the Free Worlds Alliance. As

promised, Eli Navarro devolves government to individual colony worlds, with all colonies agreeing to help maintain an FWA militia.

The Free Worlds Alliance

"Got love 'em Freeworlders, they sure did rain on the UEF's parade."

Carla Robis, Captain of the Diablo.

Apart from the Eurasian Rimworlds Combine (ERC), this group of independent star systems is the only holdout from the Colonial rebellions.



Unlike the massively centralised ERC – the Free Worlds Alliance (FWA) is a loose knit confederacy of separatist colonies who have thrown off United Earth Federation (UEF) rule, but who have only allied themselves as the FWA for mutual protection, not out of a desire to form a new superpower to challenge the UEF.

The rules in being a member of the FWA are:

- All member colonies must raise and train a colonial militia that may be called upon if they or any other member colony is attacked.
- All member colonies must lend aid to other member colonies where possible.
- Independent Spacecraft plying the trade routes between the colonies should lend travel aid to elected FWA administrators and their staff where possible.
- Independent Spacecraft plying the trade routes between the colonies should lend aid to other vessels as according to the basic tenets of Space Law.
- Any UEF personnel caught at a member colony in the act of spying should be delivered to the nearest FWA government representative, rather than being dealt with locally.

The FWA affiliated star systems are isolated from the rest of Federation space by the military blockade maintained by the UEF. The capital planet, Ernesto Prime, has a population approaching 10 million, and was originally owned by Hallidor Corp. Designated a Class One Planet by the ICA, Ernesto Prime is a democratic republic, self-sufficient in air, food and water, and is rapidly industrialising, to compensate for the loss of trade imports from the Core Systems. Smugglers regularly run the Federation blockade to sell goods to the FWA. The FWA have an official radio station called FWA News that broadcasts to the colonies from Ernesto Prime.

Rebel Star Systems

The following systems seceded from Earth rule in 2257, and have managed to retain their independence. The Free Worlds Alliance is not recognised by the United Earth Federation as a sovereign power, and the status of all these star-systems is contested.

- 18 Scorpii
- 72 Herculis
- Alpha Lyrae (Vega)
- Gamma Serpentis
- HR 6806
- Lambda Serpentis
- Mu Herculis
- Psi Serpentis
- V645 Herculis
- Zeta Herculis

Liberated Star Systems

The following systems seceded from Earth rule in 2257, but were 'liberated' by the United Earth Federation Expeditionary Force (UEFEF) during the Colonial Wars of 2258-2260.

- 12 Ophiuchi
- HD 157881
- HD 165222
- HIP 81123
- HIP 84581
- Wolf 635 (The planet of Calamity is in this system and where the campaign starts.)

SHIPS AND EQUIPMENT

"Keep your wealth portable. Sometimes you gotta jump ship, or move on real quick. Last thing you wanna worry about when your ships burning around your ears is how you gonna get your expensive antique clock collection into the life pod."

James Callahan, Pirate.

At the beginning of the campaign it can be assumed that the players have the usual personal possessions about them, and that they are stored in their cramped quarters aboard ship. Weapons can be purchased from the equipment price document (see New Horizon core rulebook).



Aboard Ship

Below is communal equipment stored in various locations on the ship:

Weapons: Stowed in the ships Vault

- x1 Shotguns. 12 gauge, pump action sawn offs.
- x2 Glock 22 pistols

Ammo:

- A box of 20 shotgun shells, and x3 ammo clips.

Medical Equipment:

- Advanced Medical Kit
- x2 Folding Stretcher
- Emergency Burn Kit

Communication:

- x3 long range Commlinks

Survival:

- x10 Mask, Respirator
- Suit Patches (pack of x20)
- x8 Vacuum Suit, Work

Tools:

Assume most common tools & parts, though some parts may need to be scavenged for.

Other:

- Ration packs for 6 people to last 3 months.
- Water supply. Self cleaning. (2 months)
- The Merchant Venturer: Space Ship.
- A Sawtooth: The crew's shuttle/runabout. (Stored in a cargo hold aboard the Merchant Venturer.)
- Colonial Ranger: 4x4 all terrain ground vehicle. (Stored in the hold of the Sawtooth.)

Note: Players should be urged to spend some of their savings and go through the 23rd century equipment costs doc.

While there is a thriving black market in the Outer Rim, the players will be expected to pay full price. Owning black market weapons may result in arrest, imprisonment and general hassle from the authorities if discovered.

The Colonial Ranger

4X4 Ground Vehicle

The Colonial Ranger is a Civilian utility vehicle designed for off road and urban use. Essentially a working vehicle that is common throughout the colonies where it performs a variety of task where off roading and a tough frame is required. The Colonial Ranger can handle 50% slopes and handle transverse slopes up to 40%.

The Colonial Ranger can carry up to six people comfortably (including driver.) and equipment. It can be

NEW HORIZON, scenario pack MV2.0

stored in the small hold of the Sawtooth. Recharging points are aboard The Merchant Venturer.

Manufacturer:	Martian Autos.
Length:	5 metres.
Width:	2.20 metres
Height:	1.80 metres.
Weight:	1.3 tons.
Engine:	120 kW, liquid cooled quad turbine.
Transmission:	automatic /with a manual option for extra hard players.
Fuel type:	Power Cell, rechargeable.
Range:	1,000 kilometres.
Speed:	190kph Highway, 50kph off-road.
Armour:	None, but the metal frame of the vehicle will offer 3 AP, and the windshield 2AP.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The information on the Herculis System were devised and written by John Ossoway; who has kindly given permission to have it included in this document.

Ta!

THE END.

"Yeah, one day the rim as we know it will get all civilised. First it'll be the big companies, then the lawyers, banks, taxman, the politician and all the honey traps of civilisation. And there won't be any room anymore for those like me 'round worlds like Calamity, wolf and all. But that's okay. No matter how far we go out into space, there always be a rim. Ships may get faster, governments will rise and fall but there will always be a rim. There will always be a place between civilisation and the utter stillness of the yet unexplored. That's where you'll find the likes of me and my kin. Government man will never be rid of us, no matter how hard they endeavour. For we will always be here out on the rim."

Captain Sutherland. Trader, liar, thief, hero and free man.



APPENDIX: HANDOUTS

Sawtooth

Shuttle

During the Colonial Wars the FWA annexed the Ascent Shipyards, and used the massive industrial complex to produce a limited number of large military vessels. However; due to the limited resources and expertise of the burgeoning FWA, the shipyards produced many smaller, lighter craft. The most famous of these ships was the Sawtooth. The FWA created the Sawtooth as a fast lightly armed vessels used for orbital interception, patrol work and ferrying personnel. Sawtooth construction was abandoned by the FWA military soon after the colonial war. (The FWA had cancelled production to concentrate on larger space military vessels.) However; to raise funds, the FWA sold off most of their Sawtooths to private buyers. (Often stripped of arms and armour.) These ships can be found in a variety of police and civilian roles.

This version of the Sawtooth was customised as a space to orbit shuttle with the cargo hold fitted to hold the 4x4 ground car, to allow the crew an extended travel range while on the planet surface. As the Merchant Venturer is not capable of planetary landings the Sawtooth is also useful for the crewmembers as Shuttle, recreation and an emergency vehicle. Also unlike the merchant Venturer it is armed. And can perform well in a dogfight. It is stored aboard the Merchant Venturer.

General Characteristics

Primary Function:	Shuttle
Contractor:	Ascent Manufacturing (Defunct)
Power Plant:	Fusion
Propulsion	
Atmospheric:	Scramrockets
Orbital:	Fusion rockets
Length:	25 metres
Height:	6.2 metres
Beam:	14.1 metres
Max Velocity	
Atmospheric:	Mach 3.1
Orbital:	2.8g
Flight Ceiling:	Trans-atmospheric
Max Payload:	1 ton
Cargo Configurations:	Can carry up to 8 passengers comfortably. In the Small hold of the Sawtooth, the Ground car (The Colonial Ranger.) is stored and can be driven out of the Rear access ramp.
Crew:	1 (Pilot)
Sensors	
Ground:	20km
Space: Passive	2000km
Space: Active	1000km
Perimeter Alert:	20,000km
Comm Range:	3000km
Standard Weapon Systems:	1x 25mm Chain Cannon. 2x AGM-204A Threat Suppression Attack Missile 4x AIM-90E Headlock Smart Missile

Game Stats

Velocity: Cruise	07
: Full Thrust	14
Manoeuvre:	2 (+4%)
Autopilot:	50%
Battle Computer:	1 (+5%)
Initiative Modifier:	1
Stealth:	1
ECM:	0
Fire Control:	1 (+2%)
Armor Value:	12

The Merchant Venturer

Caravel Class Ship

The Merchant Venturer was bought from another captain. (Jason Barabbas.) Several years ago and is a ship fit for purpose. The Caravel class ship was the brain child of the ill fated Enertek Corporation. The caravel class has proven popular with haulage companies and traders; as its robust frame hides a tough heart. Deliberately "simplified" in its construction; the vessel is perfect for customization, easy to maintain, suitable for part cannibalisation and recycling. It has large hangers that can be pressurised and easily tailored to most cargo requirements. There are generous crew areas for long in systems haulage (where F jumps are not practical) and has a tough construction that can take a great deal of punishment.

Caravel production ended with the collapse of Enertek. Yet, this class of ship is very common out in the Herculis system and can be crewed by either FWA or UEF civilians. There is a roaring trade out in the Herculis system for Caravel parts. So much so that pirates have been known to attack caravels just to strip them clean.

The Merchant Venture has been slightly modified and one of its Cargo bays has been turned into a hanger for the crew's shuttle. See the Sawtooth below. Also in each of the cargo areas there is a smuggling section that can be sealed.

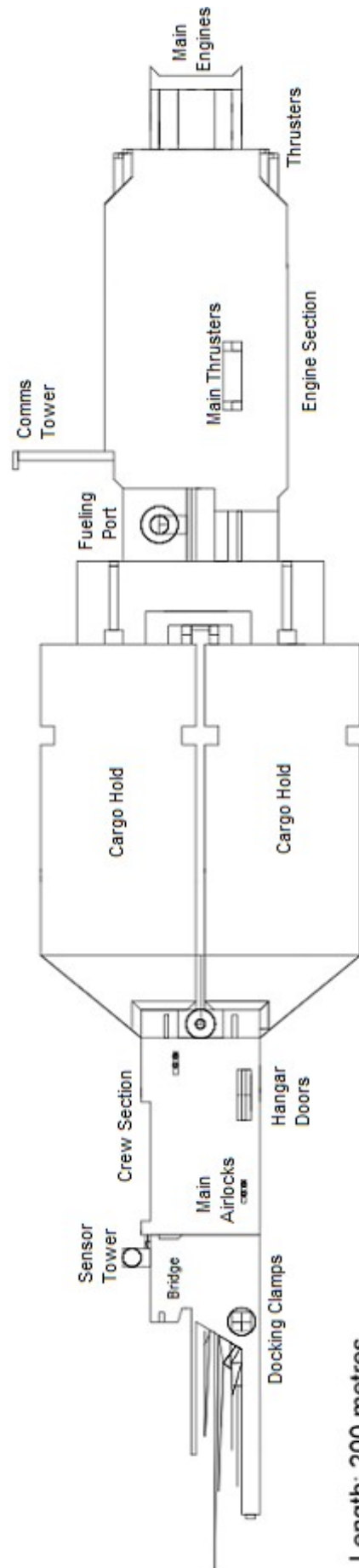
General Characteristics

Primary Function:	Colonial Transport/Haulage
Contractor:	Ascent Manufacturing (Defunct)
Power Plant:	Fusion
Propulsion	
Realspace:	Reactionless Displacement
F-Space:	FSD44
Length:	200 metres
Height:	40 metres
Beam:	62 metres
Max Velocity	
Realspace:	1g
Interstellar:	0.48LY/day (EST)
Max Payload:	2500 tons
Cargo Configurations:	5x cargo bays each capable of housing up to 500 tons.
Crew:	4 (as a minimum)
Sensors	
Space: Passive	2000km
Space: Active	1000km
Perimeter Alert:	20,000km
Comm Range:	10,000km
Standard Weapon Systems:	None

Game Stats

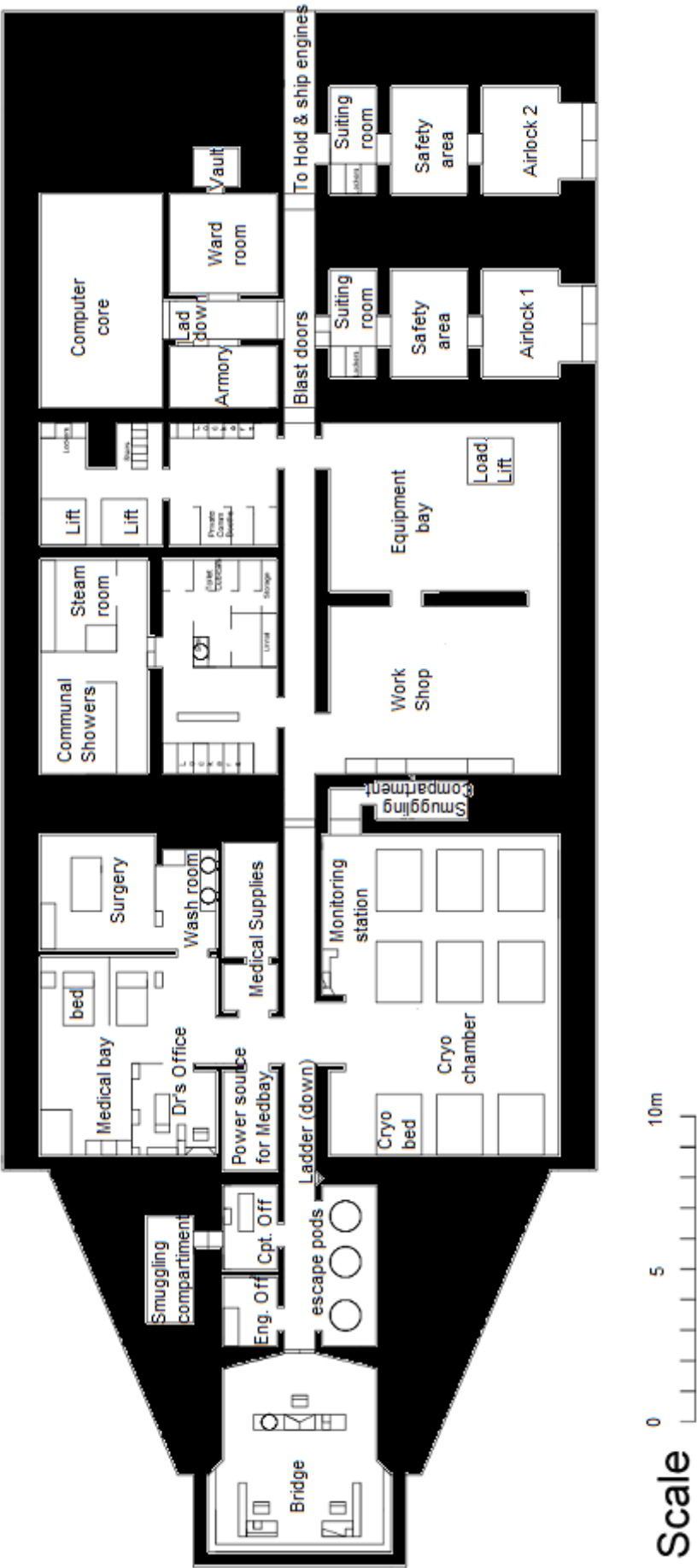
Velocity: Cruise	04
: Full Thrust	06
Manoeuvre:	-10 (-20%)
Autopilot:	70%
Battle Computer:	1
Initiative Modifier:	-5
Stealth:	0
ECM:	1
Fire Control:	0
Armor Value:	30

THE MERCHANT VENTURER – CARAVEL CLASS



Length: 200 metres.
Cargo Capacity:
Holds: 4
Crew: 4 minimum.

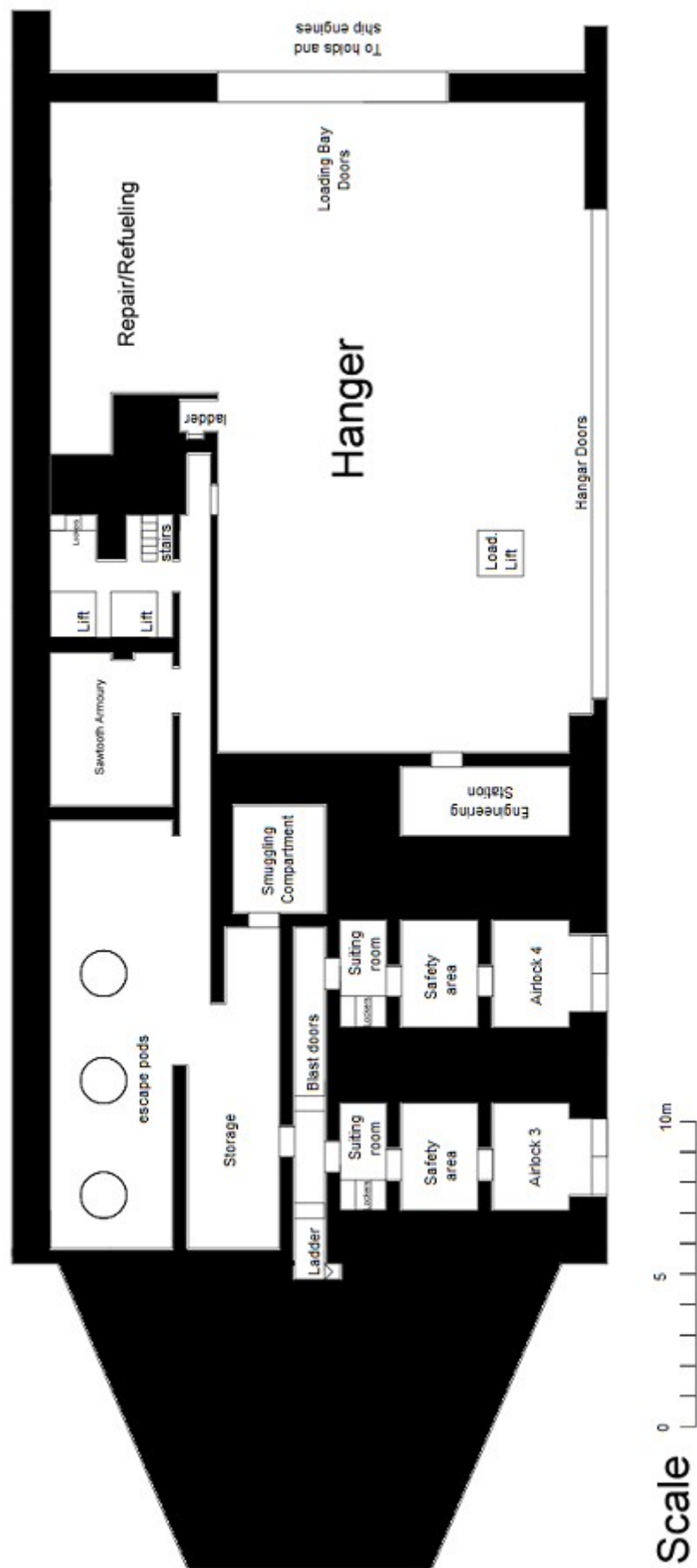
MERCHANT VENTURER DECK 1



MERCHANT VENTURER DECK 2



MERCHANT VENTURER DECK 3



CALAMITY

by Garry Cooper

Calamity is the first of the Merchant Venturer games. In this series of games the players are the crew of the Merchant Venturer, an aging tring vessel, plying its trade through the Herculis Cluster. While set in the Cthulhu Rising NH universe these adventures are not intended to be linked with the Forbidden Science. However, with a little work Keepers can easily modify this game to fit into other NH campaigns or turn them into Forbidden Science related adventures.

The games are set in the Herculis Cluster, but as above, with some modifications a keeper can easily alter the location of the action.

INTRODUCTION

This game should be read in conjunction with the MV game document (The players should have their own copy for reference.) The MV (Merchant Venturer) games assume the players are independent traders operating on the edge of the law and that they will not mind getting their hands a little dirty with less than legal activities. (This is, after all, Cthulhu Rising not Star Trek.) In the Merchant Venturer games double dealing, petty crime and double-crossing are everyday experiences.

THE SETTING

Calamity is a small agricultural planet circling the Binary system of Wolf 635 out on the far flung Herculis Cluster. As planets of the UEF go, it is of deep insignificance to the grand schemes and plots of that vast governance. It is, however, undeniable that Calamity is a beautiful world; full of green woods, high mountains capped in silver crowns of glittering snow, deep valleys full of the hard wooded Yana trees grow and its own unique forms of life teem across its surface. Its fertile earth has made it a bread basket world: its produce shipped out to other colonies and industrial concerns. Calamity is a planet that is a "someday" planet. Someday it will be large, someday it will be covered with bustling cities and someday the antecedents of those that strive now, will look back on their ancestors as brave frontiers folk who made their easy life possible. They would be shocked at the truth.

Calamity is a small, fragile and often overlooked by the UEF. Even the warships of the UEF often miss this planet on their long patrols, preferring to harbour in the relative comforts of more developed colonies. Something that suits the locals and Calamity has developed a thriving black economy centred on the one large city complex on the northern continent. New Respite barely deserves the title city but that is how it is viewed by the locals.

Calamity's relationship with the UEF is a strained one. During the colonial wars, this planet supported the Free Worlds Alliance (FWA), but the UEF halted the planets dreams of secession in a brutal assault on the planet. Now a small contingent of marines are stationed in the city of New Respite. Many of the locals still harbour anti UEF feelings and it is known that many of the bandits that trouble the Broken Jaw Mountains, north west of the city, are in fact ex FWA separatist who fled into the wilderness of Calamity.

Give the Players Investigators Handout #1.

THE CITY OF NEW RESPITE

New respite may once have been a small and bucolic town, but now it has grown beyond its ability to regulate and support its own citizens. New Respite is a perfect example of a city grown faster than its ability to plan for that growth. The centre of the city reflects a modernist feel, full of glass and chrome buildings. The middle circle becomes more natural in stone and brick and then there is the outer circle of the town that is little more than a shanty town. This township clings to the edges of the city, and many that live there do so in filth and squalor. Much of the municipal resources are basic and underfunded and undermined. The police force mostly consists of Federal Marshalls and volunteers. Policing is rough and often unsophisticated.

Many of the local Federal Marshalls are as corrupt as they come. Most are susceptible to bribes, and are quite willing to turn a blind eye with the right inducement. A standing joke around the bars of Calamity is to comment that a cop once give a criminal a beating because he offered him a bribe, but the bribe was too small.

There is a garrison of marines present on the planet. They are mostly interested in getting drunk, getting laid and getting through their tour with the minimum of fuss. Most of the marines garrisoned on Calamity are coming close to the end of their service and don't plan to die doing something risky.

Give the Players Investigators Handout #2.

KEEPERS INFORMATION 1

Beginnings

The players are crew of the Merchant Venturer, an aging Caravel class trader. The Merchant Venturer is currently docked in the orbital platform called Trinity Station. It has been loaded with a cargo of processed food for transportation to the Venice Mining Colony out on the rim. A two week journey. The goods have been bought from "Honest Wally", a local fixer and dependable gangster based in the city of New Respite.

The players have used the shuttle, the Sawtooth, to get to the planet's surface. The Sawtooth is currently sitting in the Thomas Hux Docks. Aboard the Shuttle are the players 4x4 strapped into the hold.

As the crew have just spent a month aboard ship, they will be in need of a little R&R, and Honest kindly invited the players to his bar (called somewhat unimaginatively "Wally's Bar.") Wally has promised the players a "nice little earner", that's right up their street.



KEEPERS INFORMATION 2

The Deal

Honest Wally will offer the players a simple pick up job. He needs them to drive up into the Sweetwood Hills, north of the city and pick up the goods. The cargo is 2000 cartons of illegal cigars from the Gibson Boys tobacco plantation. The job is an easy one as everyone has been paid off and no problems are to be anticipated. Though the Sweetwood hills is bandit country, but there has been no serious activity for several months.

However, unbeknownst to Wally and the players, Wally has a new competitor in town that has other plans. Mr Leroy Samuels. Samuels is a low rent criminal going for the big time. He plans to attack and destroy the Gibson plantation and steal the shipment of contraband, and as much plunder from the plantation as possible. The cigars are real, freshly made and are worth a small fortune on the open market. He believes that he is striking a blow against Wally's organisation.

A usually bold tactic for Samuels is to hire a small group of Ex FWA Separatists that went in the high valleys of the Broken Jaw Mountains to escape the UEF. This group has been hired to attack the Gibson Plantation and disrupt any shipments. The Separatist are led by a Sadist calling himself the Colonel. Samuels wants to send a message that anyone who works for Honest Wally is in danger, and also that Wally can't protect his own operations.

The players have got themselves into a local argument.

THE GAME BEGINS

The game begins with the players arriving at Honest Wally's bar in the early evening.

To be read out to the players.

Welcome to Honest Wally's, a local bar that specialise in dank carpets, chipped wooden tables and uncomfortable benches. The human service is sullen and it pays to watch your change. Yet, to be fair, the booze is cheap. Though, it's probably wise to drink only out of the bottles with recognisable brand names that are spelled correctly.

The entertainment consists of a drunken singer warbling some garbage folk song about how the FWA threw of the shackles of the UEF. Gotta hope no Federal Marshall hears it, but then the Feds don't come here. They're paid a lot of money to stay away by the owner. Speaking of which, that's why you're here. To see Honest Wally, the owner of this establishment, a well known fixer and arranger of jobs. A thin, pale and gaunt skeletal of a man that looks like he's in desperate need of a sandwich, or possibly a stake through the heart. Never a handsome man; his ugly wrinkled face is further spoiled by his rotten and jagged teeth. The occasional bath wouldn't hurt either.

Despite that, Honest Wally is useful to know as he is a man with a lot of connections and a lot of power in this part of space...

Honest Wally has two associates: Mr Frances and Mr Jennings. Two impeccably turned out and fiercely polite sadists who act as Wally's muscle. They go everywhere with him. They always smile, and always use the last name of those they are addressing with the appropriate title. Even just before they pull the trigger or twist the blade.

The Merchant Venturer is currently docked in Trinity Orbital Station, its hold filled with processed food for some Hicksville mining colony two weeks out from Calamity. Honest Wally arranged the job for you, and now he's called you in with another job offer.

Wally sits in a private cubicle in a dark corner of the bar. His goons standing at the entrance of the cubby hole, nod a greeting as you approach. The smoke from Wally's hookah pipe has a sweet narcotic smell and wreathes around the cubicle. A bored looking half Caucasian, half Chinese whore pretends to enjoy his pawing and his jokes. She smiles with faint boredom as you approach the table.

Wally grins at you, and waves for you to sit. "Hey, guys." He giggles. "I got a real sweet deal for you."

KEEPERS INFORMATION 3

Wally's Offer

Wally will be polite and enthusiastic when he speaks to the players. Wally's words have a tendency to run it themselves when he gets excited, and he has a lot of nervous energy. If the players play polite, they will be

treated well and have drinks and food provided for them. If the players are rude, they run the risk of irritating Mr Jennings and Mr Frances, who will have no compunction about having the players dragged out into the back of the bar and beaten unconsciousness by as many of Wally's thugs as it takes.

If all goes well, the players will be asked to pick up a cache of unlicensed and untaxed cigars from the Gibson Brothers Plantation up in the Sweetwood Hills. Just 2,000 packs of cigars. The cigars are part of the infamous Red Spot brand. The brand is known for its white packets with a Big Red spot on each side. Possibly one of the more famous bootlegged brands that can be found out the rim. Quality is usually good.

Streetwise roll: Red Spot have a bootleg "franchise" throughout the Rim and the Gibson's have been one such Franchise for years. They also produce their own bootlegged booze on the side, Moon Dust Brandy, which is best used as paint stripper.

The Gibson brothers are known to be fair, if "protective" of their business.

The players will be asked to take the Colonial Ranger up into Sweetwood to the Gibson Plantation.

Once the goods are picked up at the plantation, (Wally will give them the GPS co-ordinates.) They should head straight to the Sawtooth, load up and go. Security is lax at the shuttle port and, anyway, most of those that work at the port are on Wally's payroll. Once out of the system, the players should head to Venice Mining Colony, but drop out of F-Space at the given co-ordinates and hand the Cigars over to the ship waiting there. Once done, the players are to carry onto new Venice to drop the normal cargo off. E\$10,000 will be deposited into the players working account on completion (Or cash if required.).

It's a fairly low risk operation and Honest Wally will laugh at any attempt to bargain up the fee, as he knows it's a cushy number for the players. As far as he is concerned, everyone involved is trustworthy and he foresees no real problems. However, with good role-playing or good communication skill roles, he may persuade to give them 25% of the money up front. Though, with a warning on not to get "clever ideas" like running with the money and the contraband, because they will need to run to the over side of the UEF. Wally has connections all over the Rim and he can back this threat up. The players would have to run a long way to escape Wally.

If everything stays genial, he will happily chat with the players for a while and will listen to any other business proposals the players may have (Such as buying black market items, for example.) If the players decide to take the opportunity to trade for some blackmarket item while they have Wally in front of them, he will be more than happy to negotiate with them. He is a pretty shrewd operator and they will have to pay through the nose for difficult items to obtain. He will be able to get common items to them for the next day, however, he does want the players to get the cigars as quickly as possible, so will grow impatient. If they wait for the goods to arrive before getting the cigars, he may up the price if they really annoy him.

If the players refuse the Job:

Honest Wally is no thug and, if the players refuse, he will shrug it off. If the players keep refusing him, then

eventually, he will get tired of offering them work and the players will have lost a valuable contact.

Why drive when you can fly?

Calamity is not a heavily populated planet and tech levels can be low. Some farms use horses for transport, and horses can be seen on the streets of New Respite. STV or spacecrafts travel in atmosphere is not that common and Wally knows there is a risk that the local marine base (or Federal Marshalls.) may get curious if the Sawtooth is seen heading out to unpopulated area of the planet. It would be no problem for them to lock a scan on the ship and trace its flight right up to the Gibson Plantation and back. Wally thinks it's too risky, and the marines may decide to raid the plantation, and it's too expensive to pay the Federal Marshalls off. Besides it's not that long a drive. If the players insist, Wally will point out that the Gibson boys won't take kindly to the players risking their livelihoods.

GAME INFORMATION 1

Leaving the Bar

At some point the players will leave the bar, and if they have taking advantage of Honest Wally' hospitality, it may quite late when they leave for their quarters at the shuttle port. If the players have been drinking, then appropriate skill modifiers should be put in place for the next encounter.

Spot Hidden: As the players leave the bar and enter the dark streets of New Respite, they may see a figure lurking in the mouth of an alleyway. He is dressed in the plain grey homespun of the locals, but his face is covered with a dust hood. He appears to be watching the players with some interest.

If the players ignore him, he will start to follow them back to the port (Or cheap hotel, if they are staying in one.) He will do nothing unless challenged, where he will pull a gun out and fire at the players. He will then make a run for it.

If the players decide to cross the road, then he will run into the alleyway. If they give chase, they need to make a spot hidden roll to spot him disappearing down another alleyway, where he will draw his pistol and hide behind an overfilled dumpster full of rotting and rat infested garbage. He will shot at the first player that rounds the corner.

If they decide to set a trap, then he will fight until he is subdued. If the fight is noisy, then there is a 10% chance for every 2 rounds that the Federal Marshalls turn up to investigate.



KEEPERS INFORMATION 4

Markus Sorrento

If the players kill him, they will find a personal comms device on his ear with several numbers. The most recent is the Twisting Tassel Club (Samuels Club). He has about E\$20 on him and a knife. No ID.

If they captured the stranger, as above plus:

With some persuasion they may be able to find out the following.

1. His name is Markus Sorrento. He is an 18 year old kid with dreams of being a gangster.
2. He was asked to follow the players to see if the players deal could be turned to Mr Jennings advantage.
3. Players can make a Streetwise Roll: If successful, the player will know that Samuels is low on food chain in Honest Wally's organisation.
4. Markus doesn't know about the planned attack on the Gibson boys.
5. Mr Samuels is currently at the Swinging Tassel. His own strip club up in the centre of town.

If the players let him go, Markus will run into the shadows like a terrified rat. If they kill him, they will have the possibility of a marshal getting involved.

If they contact Honest Wally, then he will send Jennings to pick up the boy in a black STV.

Markus will be interrogated and probably killed. Jennings will instruct the players to simply carry one, as "We will deal with Samuels." Whether or not Samuels survives, the night will not affect the attack on the Plantation as the Colonel has been paid to attack it and he is a man of his word.

If the players take Markus, then they will have to find a way to stop him causing them trouble. If the players go to visit Samuels, then he will try to bribe them into betraying Wally, maybe even arrange to have them smuggle gun men into the plantation before the attack, and the players may find themselves over their heads unless they can come up with a clever plan to play both sides off against each other. Though neither Samuels nor Wally will take kindly to discovering that they have been manipulated by the players.



PART TWO

The Journey to the farms

The journey will take four hours by ground car. The journey to the farmstead will be fairly peaceful. As the players drive through New Respite, the buildings became less solid and lot shabbier, like the inhabitants. Eventually the city ends abruptly and the players find themselves in flat farmlands. These massive fields of wheat and corn stretch out as far as the eye can see. Gigantic automated combines and farm equipment can be seen in the distance, moving ponderously on the empty horizons. Few signs of human activity can be seen and the place seems empty and soulless.

Eventually, the ground begins to rise and the landscape becomes less boring, smaller farmsteads can be found where human activity is more apparent. Most of these farms take care of livestock and sheep and cattle can be seen on the raising fields.

Much of the planets natural wildlife and greenery becomes apparent away from the expanding farmlands. For Earther's, the landscape is familiar, but with the odd jarring note that reminds them they are on an alien world. Eventually, the players enter the hills proper and drive through steep, densely wooded valleys where the road narrows. They have entered bandit territory.

After 2 hours of single lane hard packed road, players come to a cross roads. The main road carries on up into the hills, while the narrow track leads into the valley of the Gibson Plantation. There is no sign post. The track to the plantation is narrow, little more than tyre ruts torn through the rich dark earth. The path drops into a darkest part of the woods, the Yana trees grow tall and thick here, damp green moss covers their dark brown bark. The woods on either side of the road are dark and seemingly impenetrable.

Spot Hidden: As the players drive down into the Gibson place, one of them may spot that, in the woods, they get a flash of red, like a demon eye. (This was the momentary flash of a targeting system as it scanned the player's vehicle.) If the players stop to investigate, then they may bump into one of the Colonels small scout groups. The Scouts (4 in total) will try to hide from the players, but will attack if necessary.

If there is a prolonged gun battle, then the Gibson Boys may arrive to see what's going on in their valley.

If the players drive on, they will find the road flattens out and opens into a large clearing. The players have arrived at the Gibson Plantation.

GAME INFORMATION 2

The Gibson Plantation [Map 2]

What follows is a basic description of each area on the map.

Outer Fence: Western side

4m high: Chain link fence: AP 1, HP: 20

The fence is really nothing more than a deterrent: though, it is topped by razor wire. It has sensors and can be electrified (delivering 2d6 damage at max voltage.)

Gate:

2 large steel doors: AP 3, HP 45:

The gate will have two guards, armed with shotguns. They will wait for the players to stop at the gate before asking them their business over a loud speaker. Assuming the players do not do anything stupid, the guards will let them through. They may give the ground car a quick once over, then wave them through, telling them to go straight for the compound.

If the players follow the directions given, they will be met by the Gibson boys at the compound.

(See meeting the Gibson Boys.)

Factory:

The factory is a large grey metal building that is an almost completely automated tobacco processing plant. Workers put the raw unrefined tobacco through this plant. The factory then dries, flavours, if necessary, and produces the cigars, cigarettes and tobacco for consumption. Once completed the goods are moved into the secure compound and placed in either Ware house one or two.

Inside the factory is a complex array of machinery, conveyer belts and complicated devices. If the fighting spreads into the factory, then chaos will reign as the place is a warren of badly lit corridors gantries and dead ends. A bad place to fight and die.

Tobacco Fields:

These fields are lush and well cared for. The pipes of the irrigation system can be seen to occasionally rise above the plants and spray them with purified water. Workers can be seen moving through the fields singing their working songs as they toil.

If the Colonel first attack is successful, there is a good chance that the workers will all be trapped out on the fields. The Colonel will not be able to stop his men killing, raping and torturing some of the field hands. Nor will he even try.

The tobacco plants can be used to hide in, should the players flee into them. However at some point during the siege, the Colonel will order the firing of the fields. The flames will be a red raw slash against the night sky. Lucky players may be able to pick off a handful of the separatist, who are dumb enough to be silhouetted against the burning fires.

Irrigation Plant:

This large steel cased piece of technology takes water from the Catfish River, purifies it and pumps it out over the fields. If the players are trying to make an escape, it is possible to shut off water supply (Engineering roll, or computer use to hack the system.) They can then make their way down the 2m high tube that cuts through the cliff face and comes out at the pump station above the river.

However, they will have to know about the route and then negotiate the fast flowing river, as they will have to swim out through the pipe mouth to escape. Nasty Keepers may want to put some separatists at the other end of the tunnel waiting for potential survivors.

Eastern Fence:

Same as the Outer Western Fence.

Jetty:

The Gibson boys like to fish, so they built themselves a little jetty where a rowing boat can be found. However the Catfish River can be treacherous and the players will need to make a boating skill roll to use the boat. If they follow the river, they will eventually (7 km.) come to the Catfish Falls, a hellish rock strewn set of falls that plunge 100m into a swirling nightmare abyss.

If the players decide to simply cross to the other bank, they will be faced with kilometers after kilometers of difficult woodland clinging to a steep and treacherous valley. A bad place to run without a map, and maybe being pursued.

Gibson Compound [Map 3]

Note: As with map 2, these notes cover the most pertinent information for the game.

Wall:

The wall is 3m Steel wall topped with a razor wiring top. AP: 8, HP: 65.

Gates:

Two double steel doors that swing outwards. AP: 6, HP: 45. These are the doors that the separatists will attack with car bomb. (See later.)

Gun Platform:

One side of this gate can be seen a gun platform standing 4m in height. On this platform there is a heavy SMG, crewed by one man. The area in front to the gate is clear and it can sweep across a wide area.

20mm heavy machine gun: 3d6+2 Ammo 200 (clip) 6 clips.

Platform shielding: AP 6 Hp 30

Ware house 1:

Warehouse one contains the boxed tobacco and illegal hooch. Rows of cigar and alcohol cases line the warehouse. It is an Aladdin's cave of plunder.

Ware house 2:

This Warehouse contains the same as Warehouse 1. It also contains some basic tools, and some chemical sin a separate section. Assume any reasonable item, the players are looking for, can be found in this building.

Stables:

Stables are brick made with tile roofs. There are eight thoroughbred horses in the stable. They will panic with sound of gunfire. However, should the players be able to ride and make a successful skill roll they should be able to control their horse.

Quarters:

These are the comfortable quarters provided for the field hands and the guards. It can hold sixty people in reasonable comfort. Inside there are double rooms, a communal shower, kitchen and bathroom.

Vehicles:

Scattered across the compound are a variety of vehicles (3) that can be used to further blockade the gate. (Keepers discretion.) Two are small skiffs that are glorified wheelbarrows that can carry about half a ton in weight. They have an open drivers cabin, and a large flat bed behind that is approx 3x3 meters. While another is a large truck of similar stats and size to the Colonial Ranger.

Further information:

There are approximate 20 guards around the plantation. If the separatist first attack succeeds then there will only be 10 men in the compound, the others will be hunted down and picked off. In the compound, there can be up to 10 field hands and the Gibson family. The field hands will be willing to fight. (Use basic goon stats -15% on weapon skills.)

The Gibson House [Map 4]

The Gibson house has a standard layout and contains all the items commonly found in a 23rd century house. However the Gibson boys are careful. The doors are metal. AP:6, HP: 30. The Windows are bullet proof: AP:4.

In the house can be found a small armoury where there is sufficient weaponry and ammo to needs. They have shotguns, SMGs, grenades and pistols. In the numbers needed for the players to mount a reasonable defence.

MEETING THE GIBSON

The Gibson Family

The Gibson's Brothers consist of two men: Jacques and Ralf. Ralf has a wife Susan. Susan is an ex-marine (Treat as one of the separatist for stats purposes.) There are three children (Amy 4, Carl 6 and Bethany 12.) All the children have been trained to safely load guns.

As people, they are friendly, helpful, moral, fierce friends and fierce enemies. If the players deal with the Gibson Brothers fairly, they will, in turn, be friendly and opened handed. The Gibson's boys have been informed of the player's arrival and will be greeted with caution. While the smiles are friendly, the eyes are watchful. The air is cautiously friendly. Though the Gibson boys will ask the players to identify themselves. They will stop the players at the gates.

As long as the players don't antagonise, or give cause for the brothers to get angry, the deal should go down smoothly. The players are shown to the warehouse where the cigars are kept. The Gibson brothers will chat with the players, and some sandwiches and beer is brought out while their vehicle is loaded with the consignment.

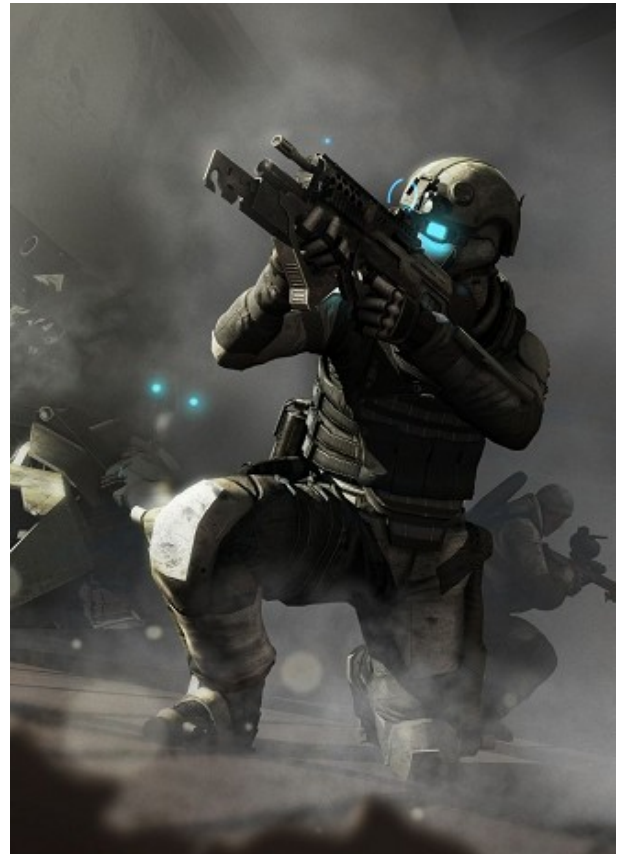
If the players report to the Gibson Brothers that they saw someone lurking in the woods, one of the brothers will arrange for some of his men to go out and explore. They

will insist that the player stay until it is investigated. Within twenty minutes, the sound of gunfire can be heard, and the Brothers put the site on lock down.

After another ten minutes, the Gibson brother will arrive with one badly wounded man. They will report they were attacked by men in the woods. They will go into lock down.

If the players got into a gunfight in the woods, they will find the place in lockdown and the Gibson brothers will insist they hand over their weapons or will refuse to let them in.

If the Gibson brother came to their aid in the woods, then they will have a fighting retreat back into the compound.



KEEPERS INFORMATION 5

The Attack

The exact timing of the attack is up to the keeper. The Colonels tactics are very basic and he doesn't want a prolonged siege. His attack will follow 5 stages outlined below. The first three stages are meant to happen simultaneously.

1. Take out the comms tower: using x3 RPG strikes, fired from the hillside.
2. Switch on the comms jammer.
3. Detonate the explosives that will take down the outer fence.
4. Rush the perimeter with vehicles and men on foot. Kill everyone in the way.
5. Attempt to get into the compound before the Gibson brothers lock it down.

Attack Breakdown

1. The separatists will fire three rockets at the comms tower, destroying the support structure of the tower. Anyone on it (or near it) will take blast damage (See stats for weapons damage.) The burning tower will slowly collapse crashing through warehouse 1. Players in the path of the tower can make luck or dodge rolls to get out of the way. The guard on the tower (Jimmy) will be killed outright.

Anyone inside will have to make a luck roll to escape alive with 2d6 damage, and a further luck roll -20% to avoid not being pinned by the wreckage of the warehouse 2 of the Gibson boys inside are killed (Phil and Mark).

2. The separatists will fire up the signal jammer. This sends a disrupting oscillating signal across the valley. However, its range is limited, but effective enough to prevent anyone getting a signal out. Players can attempt to "punch through" the disruption by using the remaining comms equipment in warehouse 2, and appropriate skill rolls. Or the players can attempt to find the location of the jammer, and if brave enough, sneak out to disable it.

If they attempt this in day light, it's unlikely they will make it through the woods. However, if they do so at night, then they will have to sneak through 3 guard zones that are patrolled by 3 men teams. Any gunfire will bring the rest of the separatists down on that area. The Jammer is on top of the northern hill, overlooking the plantation. It is sat in the back of a small truck, with two bored guards. The truck is using one of the small wooded paths cut by the Gibson brothers to act as a fire break should there be a forest fire.

3. The separatists will attempt to storm the plantation. The explosives (Planted the night before) around the fence will be detonated.

Players with a good vantage point will see the four ground vehicles tearing across the plantation, with armed men firing shots; wildly mowing down panicking field hands. Behind them can be seen scores of armed and armoured men pouring out of the woods.

4. If the players are in the compound when it is in lock down, skip to the section on the siege. If the players are outside the compound before the attack, they will have to run to the compound, or find somewhere to hide, before they are hunted down by the separatists.

KEEPERS INFORMATION 6

The Siege

A protracted siege is the last thing the Colonel wants. He has a plan, however, should that happen.

After it gets dark, he will try the following:

1. The Colonel's men will torch the fields and the factory. Then as explosions tear the factory apart, the separatists will strike.

2. The Colonel will try to use the last of the rockets (x2) to take out the gun platform by main gate. He knows, simply knocking a hole in the gate will leave his men still exposed to the heavy machine gun.
3. Successful or not, they will then drive a 4x4 vehicle at full tilt into the gates. It has been hotwired and is being driven by remote. If it is not stopped, it will hit the gates and explode doing 1d6 x10 damage. (8m radius.)
4. The separatists will then come charging through the gate. Another 4x4 will smash through the burning wreck. The separatists will come in two waves. Both waves will consist of twenty men each. They know they are vulnerable to the machine gun on the gate platform and will try to run across the ground firing, with sniper support, as quickly as possible. They will use gas grenades to cover their advance: -10% on anyone firing into/out of the smoke.

If the players/Gibson boys survive the initial assault the separatists will pull back to reconsider, their options.

GAME INFORMATION 3

Tactics: Gibson Boys

If they survive the initial assault on the gates, the Gibson boys will try to organise a defence and will listen to any sensible suggestions the players have. The Gibson's know they have enough food, ammo and water to wait it out for months. They also know that help will come when enough time has passed. They believe, correctly, that the goons will not be set up for a prolonged siege and will need to make a decisive strike, or abort their mission soon.

If the siege fails, the mercs will retreat up into the valley and report to Samuels that they have failed. If the battle is going badly, the Gibson boys will ask the players to make a run for it back to New Respite. Taking the cargo of cigars and hopefully getting help.

If the players take this option, then the Gibson boys will give them some ammo, and food. They can't spare any more men, but if the players make it back to New Respite they will have made some good friends.

The players may need to come up with a distraction of some kind to get the Colonial Ranger out of the siege line.

KEEPERS INFORMATION 7

Getting Out

If the players break through the siege line, they will still have to get out of the valley and into the Sweetwood Hills. The Colonel has set up a small ambush just in case someone gets through.

The ambush is set by the crossroads at the top of the valley. As the players approach this area, four goons will fire on the Colonial Ranger as it reaches the top of the crossroads. From the woods will burst 2 pursuit bikes. (1 driver, 1 pillion with a SMG.) And a 4x4 will come roaring

down the narrow the road towards the players. In the 4x4 is 5 armed separatists. If the players have broken through with horses, then have the Separatists riding horses.

The Chase

If the ambush fails, they will chase the players. A good old fashioned car chase through dangerous terrain. 2 cars and 3 bikes (or 8 horses with armed men if the players are making a break on horseback.) Have fun!

Bushwhacked

Once the players get out of the Sweetwood, they are safe from the separatists. However; as the players get closer to town, Samuels, with 4 crooked Federal Marshals armed with 12 gauge shotguns, will be waiting for the players on the outskirts of town. As the players drive along the road, the Feds will clearly be seen to pull their ground car across the road

Samuels, in a fancy suit, will wait with a big grin on his face as one of the Marshalls try to flag the players down. If they stop, then the Marshalls will tell the players that they have heard reports of separatists in the area and that he wants to search their vehicle. He will also demand they give up their weapons. He will then instruct them to kneel with their hands on their head; they will then be shot at by the Marshalls.



GAME INFORMATION 4

Getting around the Blockade

Samuels is hoping that the players will stop for the feds. The City of New Respite is on a flat agricultural plain. All the players need do is drive off the road and skirt around

the blockade, by driving through the cornfields (Successful driving roll). If the players try to get by the blockade, then the Marshall will shot as the players speed into the fields. They will only get one round of shots off before the Colonial Ranger vanishes into the thick Cornfield. The Marshalls will pursue them across the flat farmlands (They only have to follow the flatted corn track!). There is a risk (Keepers discretion.) of both Marshalls and players playing chicken with one of the massive, automated combine harvesters.

Once the players get into town, Samuels will pull back and halt his pursuit.

GETTING INTO TOWN

If the players go straight to Honest Wally's bar, then Wally will thank them for their warning and will suggest the players get some food and rest. He will provide some rooms for them in the back of the bar. Medical help will be provided if needed. Honest Wally will make a few phone calls and backup will be heading towards the Gibson Farm.

Also:

- All hell will break loose for Samuels (if still alive) as Honest Wally brings all his resources to bare to put Samuels out of Honest Wally's misery...
- Or the players may decide to get to the Sawtooth and go back to farm; the Sawtooth is heavily armed and armoured and will certainly tip the balance for the Gibson boys. It will take approx 45 minutes to get there. If the Sawtooth makes a few passes firing, then the separatist will flee into the woods.
- Or they simply get back to the Docks, load the ground car on the Sawtooth and leave the planet. If they carry out the mission, Wally will only be slightly annoyed that they didn't tell him about the attack.

Whatever happens, it's unlikely that Samuels (if still alive at this point) and what's left of his vanishing supporters will be around when the players pass through this way again.

CONCLUSION

If the players have succeeded, they will have the gratitude of the Gibson brothers and Hones Wally will consider himself in the player's debt. A favour that may come in useful at some point for the players.

The Game should end with the players taking off out of the docks and landing in the Merchant Venturer's hanger. Below them rolls the green blue planet of Calamity. The Players still have to deliver their cargo to the drop off point. And they probably won't notice the two stowaways aboard the ship as they slip into their cryopods...

THE END.

APPENDIX A: NPC CHARACTERISTICS

Statistical profiles are gathered here to enable the Keeper to copy or print out these pages separately from the campaign to provide a handy reference when running this chapter.

THE COLONEL

Aged 46

STR: 15 Move: 3
CON: 16 HP: 30
SIZ: 14 Dex SR: 3
INT: 14
POW: 14
DEX: 14
APP: 09
BRA: 17

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	55	+0	1d3+1d4
Knife	1	40	+0	1d4+2+1d4
M25 Cmbt Rifle	3/A5	55	+0	2d8*
M11P Pistol	3	55	+0	1d10+2**

*4 clips of 70 + Grenade Launcher x1

**10mm pistol, (20 rds) 2 clips

Armour:

CBA 8 pts

Skills:

Dodge: 45%, Listen: 35%, Drive: 40%, Streetwise: 35%, Hide 40%, Spot Hidden: 45%, Tactics: 45%.

Appearance:

The Colonel is a tall and rangy man with a shaven head. He has the lean and hungry look of a professional killer. His steel blue eyes show no emotion.

Note:

The Colonel is in fact an ex Lt of the FWA that deserted his unit during the Colonial War. His guilt over his cowardice has made him bury himself further into his own twisted world martial honour and pride. He has given himself over to brutality and torture. He is capable of justifying any action to himself no matter how sadistic.

Tactics:

He believes, he is something of a tactical expert, but he is in reality inflexible in his tactics and unable to deal with sudden changes in battlefield movement. While he is smart, he is not a flexible thinker and player innovation may derail his plans.

If he takes more than 40% casualties, he will pull out of the assault on the Gibson Place.

SEPARATISTS (x60)

STR: 13 Move: 3
CON: 12 HP: 23
SIZ: 11 Dex SR: 3
INT: 11
POW: 10
DEX: 12
APP: 10
BRA: 11

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	55	+0	1d3
Knife	1	40	+0	1d4+2
M25 Cmbt Rifle	3/A5	40	+0	2d8*
M11P Pistol	3	45	+0	1d10+2**

*4 clips of 70 + Grenade Launcher x1

**10mm pistol, (20 rds) 2 clips

Note: 2 of the separatists have x3 Disposable Heavy Missile SS 1 / 4 HE: 8d6 to all in 3m radius of strike.

Armour:

CBA 8 pts

Skills:

Dodge: 45%, Listen: 35%, Drive: 40%, Streetwise: 35%, Hide 40%, Spot Hidden: 45%.

Appearance:

Varies. But they wear full combat body armour, and with long camouflaged trench coats that shimmer and shift with the colours of the local environment. If they are switched off then the coats colour is a dull grey.

Notes:

The separatists are ex-FWA deserters, brigands, thieves and crooks that have hacked out a living on the margins of Calamity. Many of the separatists have received military training, but for many that was a long time ago.

They are brave in their own way, but they are not stupid and won't risk their own lives needlessly. Most are only loyal to the Colonel because he pays well. Not out of love.

HONEST WALLY

STR: 08 Move: 3
CON: 10 HP: 18
SIZ: 08 Dex SR: 3
INT: 15
POW: 10
DEX: 10
APP: 05
BRA: 16

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
----------	-----	----	----	-----

None. He has people for that sort of thing.

Armour:

None.

Skills:

Handgun: 35%, Knife: 40%, Fist: 55%, Dodge: 45%, Listen: 35%, Drive: 40%, Streetwise: 35%, Hide 40%, Spot Hidden: 45%, Bargain: 65%, Fast Talk: 70%, Speak: ColSpeak. 60%.

Notes:

Cunning as a snake and with the morals of a weasel. Honest Wally is perfectly equipped to deal with the shark pit that is New Respite. He is, however, no thug and rewards those that are loyal and dependable for their efforts. He understands the old adage that you catch more flies with honey, and incorporates this into his business practices.

He is a little awkward and "geeky" in social interaction, but underneath that exterior he is quite ruthless when it comes to dealing with "problems."

MR JENNINGS

Honest Wally's Muscle #1

STR: 14 Move: 3
CON: 15 HP: 30
SIZ: 15 Dex SR: 3
INT: 14
POW: 14
DEX: 12
APP: 11
BRA: 13

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	55	+0	1d3+1d4
Knife	1	40	+0	1d4+2+1d4
Pistol Glock 22	3	45	+0	1d10+1*

*.40-calibre pistol, (15 rds) 2 clips

Armour:

None.

Skills:

Dodge: 45%, Listen: 35%, Drive: 40%, Streetwise: 35%, Hide 40%, Spot Hidden: 45%, Art appreciation: 67%, Being elegant: 57%.

Notes:

Mr Jennings is well dressed, well mannered and well spoken. Even when torturing or killing. Like Wally, he is no thug, but does believe in choosing the most expedient way of dealing with a problem no matter how violent. He is loyal to Wally and cannot be bought.

Jennings is also very erudite and fascinated with late 20th European art. His prize possession is a replica of a pickled sheep that imitates a 20th/21st century British artist. It's in his front room. He calls it Tracy.

MR FRANCES

Honest Wally's Muscle #2

STR: 18 Move: 3
CON: 16 HP: 33
SIZ: 17 Dex SR: 3
INT: 11
POW: 12
DEX: 12
APP: 12
BRA: 15

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	75	+0	1d3+1d6
Knife	1	60	+0	1d4+2+1d6
Pistol Glock 22	3	75	+0	1d10+1*

*.40-calibre pistol, (15 rds) 2 clips

Armour:

None.

Skills:

Dodge: 65%, Listen: 35%, Drive: 40%, Streetwise: 35%, Hide 40%, Spot Hidden: 45%, Interrogate: 57%, Rifle: 45%, SMG: 65%, Loom out of shadows: 65%.

Notes:

Mr Frances is also well mannered and polite, but ultimately he is a thug in a suit, kept under control by his friend, and lover, Mr Jennings.

MR LEROY SAMUELS

Aged 65

STR: 12 Move: 3
CON: 10 HP: 18
SIZ: 08 Dex SR: 3
INT: 15
POW: 10
DEX: 10
APP: 09
BRA: 12

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	50	+0	1d3
Knife	1	40	+0	1d4+2
Pistol Glock 22	3	40	+0	1d10+1*

*.40-calibre pistol, (15 rds) 2 clips

Armour:

None.

Skills:

Dodge: 45%, Listen: 35%, Drive: 40%, Streetwise: 35%, Hide 40%, Spot Hidden: 45%, Sleaze: 54%.

Notes:

Leroy is a man desperately trying to hold onto his youth. He surrounds himself with the latest technologies, the young and the beautiful and anything that does not remind him of his morbid fear of dying. This fear comes from his massive egocentric nature where he cannot face the extinction of his own existence.

He is a complete coward that masks it with bravado and superficial charm. He dresses well his body and face show signs of cosmetic surgery. He dressed in the latest youth fashion and uses the latest youth phrases in a jarring manner.

He is tired of his small time business and paying his tithe to Honest Wally and thinks it's time for a change of management. Sadly, whatever the outcome of the Siege at the Gibson Plantation, he is doomed. Whether or not the players survive, Wally will retaliate destroying Samuels, his tacky club and many of his henchmen.

Honest Wally believes in sending out clear messages.

GIBSON BOYS

STR: 13 Move: 3
CON: 13 HP: 26
SIZ: 13 Dex SR: 3
INT: 11
POW: 11
DEX: 12
APP: 11
BRA: 13

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	55	+0	1d3+1d4
Knife	1	40	+0	1d4+2+1d4
Pistol Glock 22	3	45	+0	1d10+1*
M41 SMG	3/5/10	45	+0	2d6+4**
Combat Shotgun	3	50	+0	4d6+2/2d6+1***

*.40-calibre pistol, (15 rds) 2 clips

**3 clips

***12 gauge OR 3 grenades

Armour:

PBA 4 pts

Skills:

Dodge: 45%, Listen: 35%, Drive: 40%, Streetwise: 35%,
 Hide 40%, Spot Hidden: 45%, SMG: 45% Rifle: 45%
 Explosives: 40%, Throw: 50%, Shotgun: 50%.

Notes:

For the Gibson Brothers, add 20% to skills.

MARKUS SORRENTO**Aged 18**

STR: 12 Move: 3
 CON: 10 HP: 26
 SIZ: 11 Dex SR: 3
 INT: 11
 POW: 10
 DEX: 12
 APP: 11
 BRA: 11

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	55	+0	1d3
Knife	1	40	+0	1d4+2
Pistol Glock 22	3	45	+0	1d10+1*

*.40-calibre pistol, (15 rds) 2 clips

Armour:

None.

Skills:

Dodge: 45%, Listen: 35%, Drive: 40%, Streetwise: 35%,
 Hide 40%, Spot Hidden: 45%.

FEDERAL MARSHALL (x4)**Crooked Police Officers**

STR: 12 Move: 3
 CON: 11 HP: 24
 SIZ: 13 Dex SR: 3
 INT: 11
 POW: 11
 DEX: 12
 APP: 12
 BRA: 12

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Unarmed cmbt.	1	55	+0	1d3+1d4
M11P Pistol	3	50	+0	1d10+1
M36 Shotgun	3	60	+0	4d6+6/1d6*

*stun

Armour:

RBA (6 AP)

Notes:

This is a typical police officer. They are well trained, tend to be cool under pressure and able to use small group tactics if necessary.

GENERIC GOONS**Violent goons**

STR: 12 Move: 3
 CON: 13 HP: 26
 SIZ: 13 Dex SR: 3
 INT: 11
 POW: 11
 DEX: 12
 APP: 11
 BRA: 12

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	55	+0	1d3+1d4
Knife	1	40	+0	1d4+2+1d4
Pistol Glock 22	3	45	+0	1d10+1*
Combat Shotgun	3	50	+0	4d6+2/2d6+1**

*.40-calibre pistol, (15 rds) 2 clips

**12 gauge

Armour:

PBA 4 pts

Skills:

Dodge: 45%, Listen: 35%, Drive: 40%, Spot Hidden: 45%, Throw: 50%, Explosives: 40%.

Notes:

These stats are for any generic goon, or NPC that the players may encounter.

GENERIC 4x4 VEHICLE

Length: 5 metres
 Width: 2.20 metres
 Height: 1.80 metres
 Weight: 1.3 tons
 Engine: 120 kW, liquid cooled quad turbine
 Transmission: Automatic
 Fuel type: Power Cell, rechargeable
 Range: 1,000 kilometres
 Speed: 190kph Highway, 50kph off-road.
 Armour: 6AP, and the windshield 2AP. HP: 45

MOTOR BIKES

Length: 2 metres
 Speed: 140kph
 Armour: None. HP: 20.

APPENDIX B: HANDOUTS

INVESTIGATORS HANDOUT 1

The Setting

Calamity is a small agricultural planet circling the Binary system of Wolf 635 out on the far flung Herculis Cluster. As planets of the UEF go it is of deep insignificance to the grand schemes and plots of that vast governance. It is, however, undeniable that Calamity is a beautiful world; full of green woods, high mountains capped in silver crowns of glittering snow, deep valleys full of the hard wooded Yana trees grow and its own unique forms of life teem across its surface. Its fertile earth has made it a bread basket world: its produce shipped out to other colonies and industrial concerns. Calamity is a planet that is a “someday” planet. Someday it will be large, someday it will be covered with bustling cities and someday the antecedents of those that strive now; will look back on their ancestors as brave frontiers folk who made their easy life possible. They would be shocked at the truth.

Calamity is a small, fragile and often overlooked by the UEF. Even the warships of the UEF often miss this planet on their long patrols; preferring to harbour in the relative comforts of more developed colonies. Something that suits the locals and Calamity has developed a thriving black economy centred on the large city complex on the northern continent. New Respite barely deserves the title city but that is how it is viewed by the locals.

Calamity's relationship with the UEF is a strained one. During the colonial wars this planet supported the Free Worlds Alliance. (FWA), but the UEF halted the planets dreams of secession in a brutal assault. Now a small contingent of marines are stationed in the city of New Respite. Many of the locals still harbour anti UEF feelings and it is known that many of the bandits that trouble the Broken Jaw Mountains, north west of the city, are in fact ex FWA separatist who fled into the wilderness of Calamity.

INVESTIGATORS HANDOUT 2

The City of New Respite

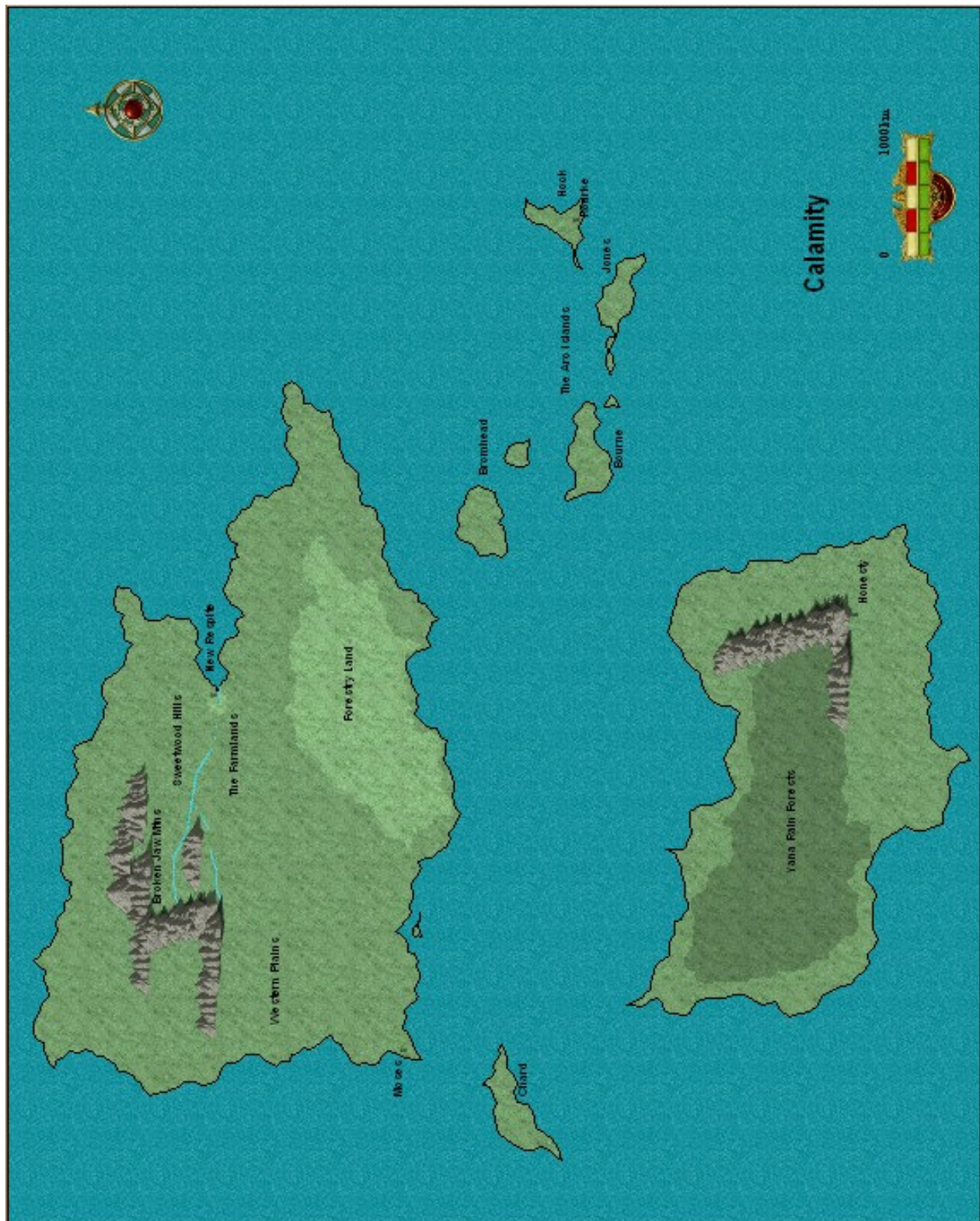
New Respite is a perfect example of a city grown faster than its ability to plan for that growth. The centre of the city reflects a modernist feel, full of glass and chrome buildings. The middle circle becomes more natural in stone and brick and then there is the outer circle of the town is little more than a shanty town. This township clings to the edges of the city and many that live there do so in filth and squalor. Much of the municipal resources are basic and underfunded and undermanned.

Many of the local Federal Marshalls are as corrupt as they come. Most are susceptible to bribes, and are quite willing to turn a blind eye with the right inducement. A standing joke around the bars of Calamity is to comment that a cop once give a criminal a beating because he offered him a bribe, but the bribe was too small.

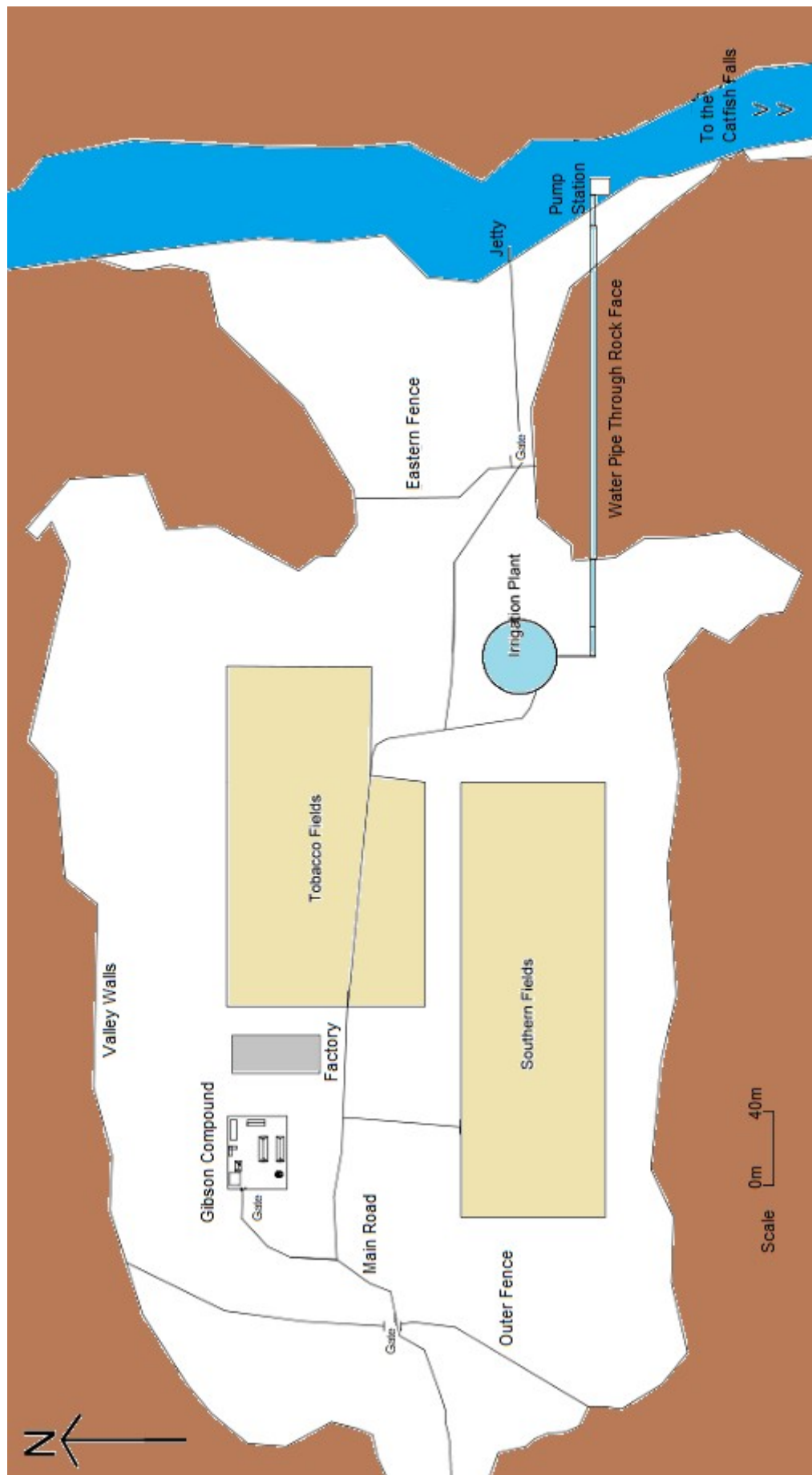
There is a garrison of marines present on the planet. They are mostly interested in getting drunk, getting laid and getting through their tour with the minimum of fuss. Most of the marines garrisoned on Calamity are coming close to the end of their service and don't plan to die doing something risky.

Calamity is a good place to go for work, a good place for deals and that's why you're here.

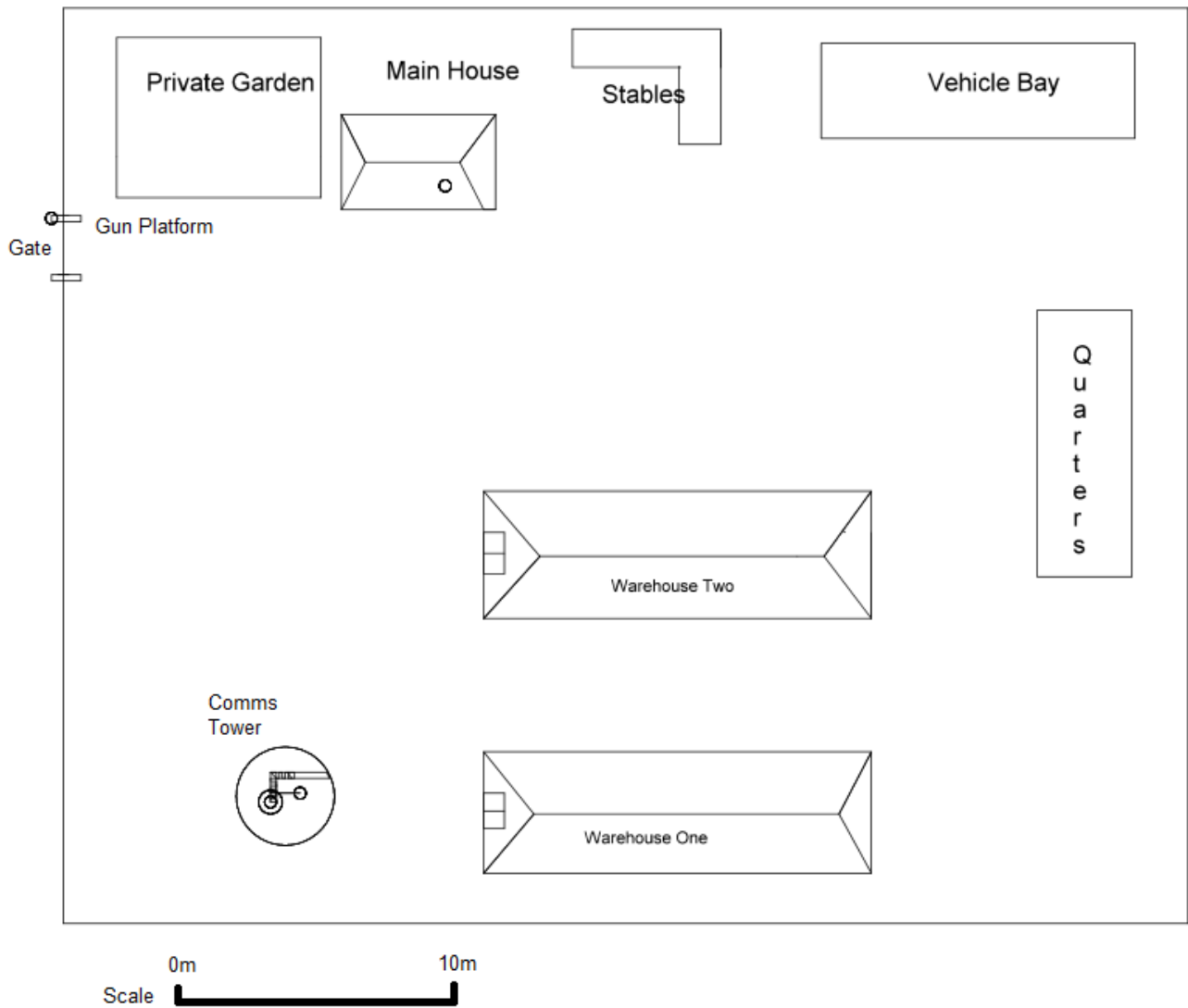
MAP 1: CALAMITY



MAP 2: GIBSON PLANTATION

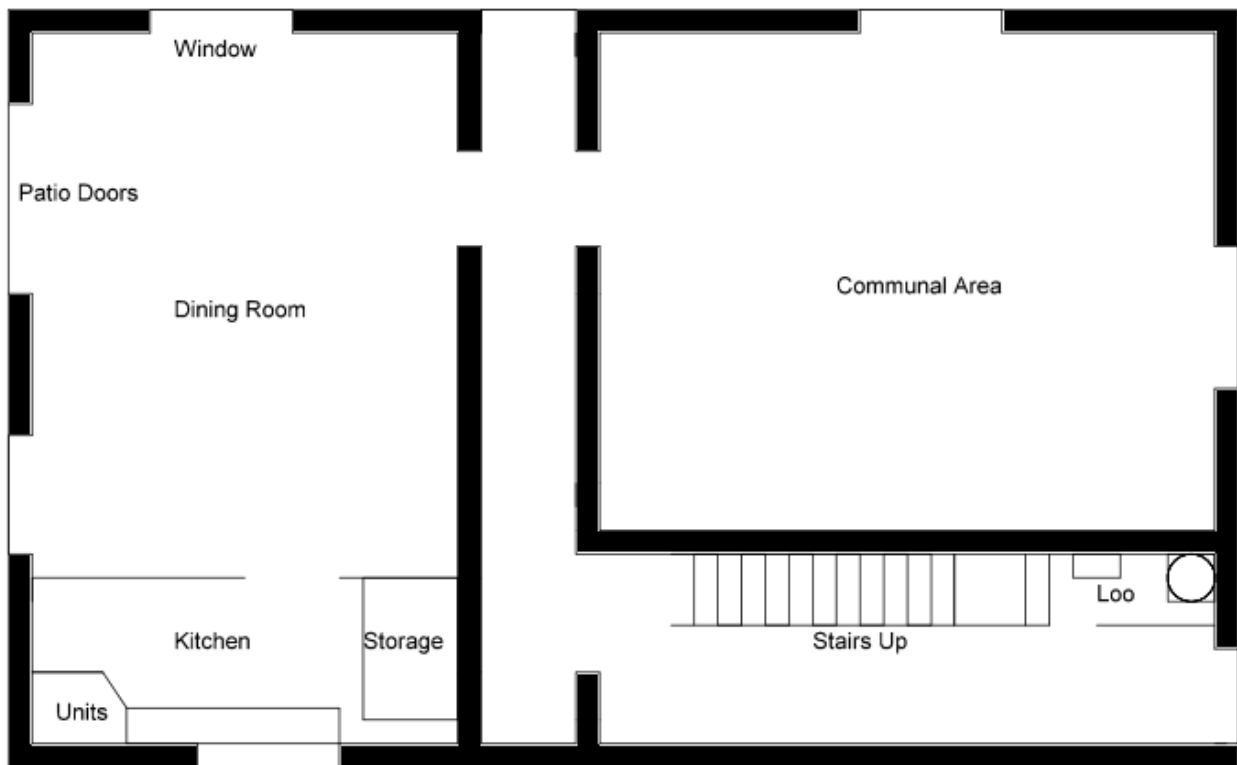


MAP 3: GIBSON COMPOUND



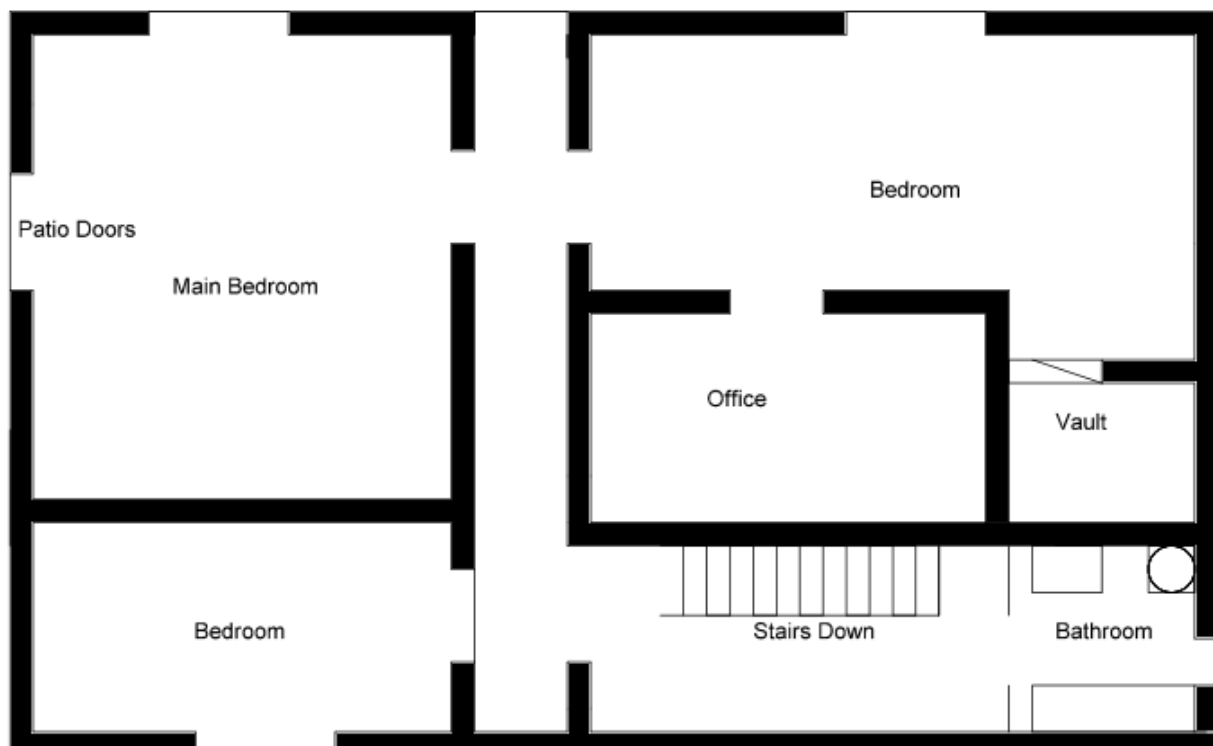
MAP 4: THE GIBSON HOUSE

Ground Floor



Scale: 0 5m

First Floor



EREBUS

by Garry Cooper

This game is the second adventure in the Merchant Venturer Campaign. It follows directly on from the events of MV01 Calamity. This game can easily be re-jigged to fit into existing Cthulhu Rising NH campaigns, played as a stand alone or as part of the MV series. The game can also be modified to fit any number of players and experience levels.

"It is in the tears of the grieving that war is measured."

Imam Korunus. During a speech at the FWA/UEF peace conference nearly a decade ago.

"If they ever find out about the truth of Erebus they'll string me up by the neck. If I'm lucky. No one can uncover the truth, Crane. Kill them all. Kill everyone!"

FWA Senator Andrew Jackson, issuing his orders to Captain Crane.

THE STORY SO FAR...

At the end of the last game, the players probably boarded the Merchant Venturer with their legal, and illegal, cargo provided by Honest Wally; Calamity's most powerful "independent businessman." Unbeknownst to the player's, two fugitives hunted by a corrupt FWA senator, have stowed away on the Merchant Venturer.

At first glance, this should be a fairly simple 2 weeks cargo run to the New Venice Mining Colony. At the start of the games the players are in Cryo stasis aboard the Merchant Venturer. The players awake to find the Merchant Venturer has dropped out of F-Space a week too early. There are also signs that they have had stowaways and the Sawtooth has been stolen.

Drifting alongside the Merchant Venturer is a ghost from the Colonial Wars. The heavy troop transporter, the Erebus.

The Mystery of the Erebus has fired the imagination of millions in the Herculis Cluster. During the height of the Colonial War, the ship was a former UEF spacecraft that had been captured and turned over to the FWA cause. However, the Erebus vanished under mysterious circumstances. The tragedy cost the lives of over 300 FWA men and women. The mystery that surrounds the Erebus has fired all kinds of conspiracy theories. Aliens, strange experiments, government plots and pirate activities have all been given as explanations for the vanishing of the Erebus.

The truth, if revealed, will rock the FWA to its core...

Game Notes

While MV02 does not involve the Forbidden Science, it would be fairly easy to add a Forbidden Science element to the adventure.

Also, this is a game where a lot of the action has already happened "off camera," and as such it's important to

read through the game information carefully before playing. For keeper convenience, I have added a crib sheet of the most important facts of the game below.

Enjoy...

THE PLOT OUTLINE

10 years ago

- During the colonial wars, the FWA fleet Admiral Andrew Jackson sold military secrets to the UEF.
- FWA Agent Martin White intercepted Admiral Jackson's UEF contact. The contact died during interrogation. However, the contact's PDA held some encrypted files that he soon decoded. The files uncovered evidence of Jackson's treachery.
- Martin White boarded the Erebus and planned to take the data pad to the nearest FWA Intelligence base.
- Admiral Jackson discovered Martin White's plan and had him followed. Realising his plans to travel aboard the Erebus, Jackson ordered the sabotaging and life support of the ship.
- However, the Admirals' agents betrayed her. They planned to sell the ship as salvage to the UEF. As ordered, they wired the life support to fail while the ship was in F-Space. However, they did also reprogramme the Nav computer to drop the ship out of deep space.
- The Admiral, to insure all leads were tied up, had the saboteurs killed. However, one of the saboteurs, Khalid Rafi, survives and flees to Calamity. Khalid is later arrested by the UEF for gun running.

- The Erebus enters into the legends of the Herculis Cluster.
- Khalid spends nine years in a Sol System Prison.
- Andrew Jackson becomes a senator of the FWA. He won votes and popularity on the war hero ticket.

One year ago

- Nine years later, Khalid is released from prison and is tracked down by Alison Baker. Alison wants to find the body of her brother aboard the Erebus. She informs him that she knows he was on the ship's crew manifest and offers Khalid a lot of money to help her find the Erebus.
- Khalid is amused by young Alison Baker's naivety and believes that he can use her cash to get to the Erebus and, after "removing her", attempt to sell the ship to criminals for salvage.
- Alison Baker is, in reality, a FWA intelligence officer. Her mission is to uncover the truth about the Erebus, and find the Cryopod of Martin White and the PDA.
- Senator Jackson has discovered that FWA intelligence has made contact with Khalid. He has them tracked.

1 week ago

- Alison Baker spots the Senators' agents on Calamity and smuggles aboard a ship heading past the co-ordinates given by Khalid. (The Merchant Venturer) However another agent has put a small tracker on the Merchant Venturer.
- Jackson orders her agent, Captain Crane, to intercept the Merchant Venturer and destroy all traces of the Erebus.
- If successful, Crane will then insure that his ship, the Missouri, will suffer major engine failure as it approaches its home base. Only Crane and his crew will survive, the FWA marines will perish in the fire and explosion.

For more details, please refer to the following text.



KEEPERS INFORMATION 1

Secrets

For nearly a decade, the FWA heavy troop transporter the Erebus, has drifted dead in deep space. Silent, cold and with no signs of human life, it marks its lonely course into the deep darkness. Believed destroyed during the colonial wars by enemy action, the ship has all but been forgotten by the FWA government. If the secrets that surround the death of the Erebus were ever to be revealed, the scandal would rock the FWA. The scandal would be the inglorious end of the proud career of a once trusted governor of the FWA. For the "enemy action", that resulted in the death of over 350 FWA personnel, was the result of cold blooded sabotage orchestrated by a traitor in the midst of the FWA military and the political machine.

During the chaotic and bloody Colonial wars, the FWA's dream of freedom had an uncertain future. Many brave men and women risked their lives for a shot at freedom. Others were less than scrupulous and played both sides off of each other. One such person was the Chief of Admiralty staff, Andrew Jackson. He used his position in the FWA fleet to line his own pockets by trading secrets and military plans to the UEF.

Indirectly, his actions led to the death of hundreds of FWA soldiers and civilians. However, he was skilled in covering his tracks and came out of the war, appearing the perfect FWA patriot. After the war, he used his fame to rise to power in the democratic parliament of the FWA, and is now a senior politician in the FWA governance. During the war, he was nearly undone, however, by a FWA spy by the name of Martin White. White had intercepted a UEF agent that was Jackson's contact. The UEF agent died during questioning but had a PDA full of encrypted information.

After weeks of work, White cracked the code and discovered hundreds of files incriminating many within the FWA. Jackson was one of them. White was too cautious to transmit the data openly and decided to arrange travel aboard the troop transporter the Erebus. It was heading to a FWA world with a large Intelligence base.

Admiral Jackson soon discovered the death of his contact and that his PDA had been captured by a single agent. Fearing what may be on it, he arranged to have White killed. He had his own agents track down the fleeing agent to the Erebus hours before it left. Unwilling to risk exposure by a direct assault they tried sabotage. Posing as dock crew, they got aboard the ship and rewired the Nav computer and the life support. The plan was simple. Insure the ship entered F-Space, then the life support and Cryopods would shut down. The ship would then fail to jump out of F-Space. Effectively vanishing the ship from reality.

The admiral believed that the destruction of a military ship in war time would bring less scrutiny than a dead Intelligence officer in a FWA military compound. Besides nothing would be missed, all evidence would be destroyed.

KEEPERS INFORMATION 2

Deceiving the deceiver

However, the good admiral should not have trusted his allies. While they performed the sabotage, they also deliberately miscalculated the F-jump. They knew nothing of the spy and his secrets, only that the admiral wanted the ship destroyed. They saw that as a waste of good salvage. They programmed the ship to drop out at a predetermined location where they would pick it up at their leisure. The plan was to sell the military vessel to the UEF. With all its coded systems and battle formations read outs and movement logs, the UEF intelligence would have had a valuable find. Yet, before the mercenaries could contact the UEF, they were "cleaned up" by agents of the Admiral.

Only one of the saboteurs escaped. Khalid Rafi fled the FWA world and ended up on the newly UEF recaptured planet of Calamity. He avoided the pursuing cleanup team, who eventually give up the chase after the trail went cold, six months later. The commander of the cleanup team had no idea why the mercenaries were to be killed, but didn't plan on forfeiting his pay by telling the admiral they had failed to kill all of their targets. The admiral, believing everything was cleaned up, soon forgot about the Erebus.

KEEPERS INFORMATION 3

Not Forgotten

A year later, Khalid Rafi was arrested by the UEF for running guns to FWA resistance on Calamity. He was taken back into the core worlds and ended up on a penal colony. Khalid was broken by his time in prison and was eventually released 12 months ago. For the last year, he has moved around the Sol System, getting whatever work he could scrounge up.

His future looked bleak until he was contacted by Alison Baker, a UEF citizen that claimed to be the sister of a FWA separatist Sgt Paul Baker, who died aboard the Erebus. Alison told Khalid that she had tracked him down after years of searching. She wanted to find her brothers body, so she could have closure on her grief. Alison told him she had heard he was one of the FWA port authorities' engineers that worked on the Erebus. She seemed unaware of his role in the Erebus incident, and offered Khalid a lot of money to help track down the location of the ship. Khalid was desperate for money and boasted that he knew where the Erebus could be found.

He, however, plans to use her cash to find the ship, and then kill her, destroy the evidence of his role on the incident and then use some pirate contacts to reduce the ship to scrap. But first, he has to make sure the ship is where he believes it to be.

Unfortunately, for Khalid anyway, he is in far more danger than he realises. Alison is also not who she appears to be. She is in fact a FWA Operative (read Assassin) trying to track down the Erebus. Khalid has

been too blinded by his own desperate greed to ask questions. Unbeknownst to Khalid, FWA intelligence had spent years trying to find him and when they succeed in doing so, they activated one of their best agents to make contact. Alison's mission is to find the Erebus and get the PDA captured by Martin White. Once she has done this, she will send a coded transmission to New Venice where a craft will be dispatched to her co-ordinates to pick her up.

The FWA intelligence Core re-opened the Erebus case after suspicions were raised about funding arrangements for Senator Jackson election campaign. A lead led back to White and a cryptic message he left before boarding the Erebus. The message also hinted at the PDA. But that's not enough to arrest and convict such a powerful person. They need the Data pad that rests in the hands of the corpse of Martin White.

KEEPERS INFORMATION 4

Added Complication

Six months ago, Senator Jackson's agents become aware that someone was searching for Khalid and the Erebus. When his agents informed her that a known (to him) FWA agent and Khalid had been spotted on Calamity, Jackson ordered their execution. Fearing for his reputation, he has thrown a lot of money and resources into intercepting Khalid and Alison. Even a whiff of scandal could end his career.

Crane is captain of the FWA assault ship The Missouri. Aboard the ship there are 40 FWA marines under the command of Lt Torres. The Militia are unaware of the true nature of their mission.

Crane has informed Lt Torres that the MV is in fact pirates and scavengers that have somehow traced the location of the Erebus and plan to strip it for salvage. He has faked a mission brief that implies the pirates are to be captured, interrogated and executed. LT Torres is sceptical of Crane, but cannot deny the reality of the Erebus presence when he sees it. Should he, or his soldiers, find out the truth it's likely they will arrest Crane and his crew.

Jackson's agents tracked Khalid and Alison to Calamity. In response, he sent his favourite killer Captain Stephen Crane, a Colonial war Veteran, to hunt the two down. Alison spotted one of the agents. She then attempted to cover her tracks by smuggling aboard a ship passing close to the co-ordinates given by Khalid (That's where the Merchant Venturer comes into the story.)

However, they were spotted and Stephen Crane was informed they had boarded the Merchant Venturer. Taking an enormous risk, he entered UEF space, and, using barrage of stealth technology, entered the system of Calamity. Crane tracked the Merchant Venturer and will arrive soon after the players have boarded the Erebus.

Aboard the ship, the two stowaways waited until the players had entered Cryo stasis before Alison to Khalid's

surprise, hacked into the ships mainframe and made a minor correction to the ships flight plan.

The MV would drop out of F-Space a week earlier near to the co-ordinates that Khalid had sent the Erebus. Then once, the ship had been found, reset the ships navigation's to jump back into F-Space and continue to New Venice. Meanwhile, the stowaways would steal the Sawtooth to get across to the ship.

Alison hoped the players would be orbiting New Venice before they realized anything had happened. Yet, unbeknownst to Alison, the moment they opened the main hanger doors, an obscure safety feature of the Merchant Venturer kicked in and the Players pods began the process of waking the players up.

Alison has also stolen some portable generators, two spacesuits, several back up oxygen packs and some rations (Enough for two weeks.) When she gets aboard the Erebus, she plans to find the main computer core and jury rig access using a portable generator. From there, she hopes to find the cryopod of Martin White on the Crew log books (He is number 145). There are 358 cryopod's on board. Without that information it would take days of ghoulish work to track the cryopod down. Once she is aboard the Erebus, Alison will send a signal from the Sawtooth and her pick up vessel will be dispatched. She expects to spend up to a week aboard the ship.



KEEPERS INFORMATION 6

The Ghoul

The Ghoul was once a 4th gen android dedicated to protecting the crew and passengers of the Erebus. Driven mad by the events of the accident, exposure to F-space, and its attempts at modifying itself, the ghoul has become a twisted and deranged shadow of its former self. It has kept itself alive by intermediate periods of hibernation and inactivity. The creature's appearance has altered dramatically with some of its own clumsy repairs on itself and it poses a hidden threat to the players and NPCs.

KEEPERS INFORMATION 7

Running the Game

This game is designed to have a loose construction with a wide selection of NPC's that may friend or foe, depending on how the players act. In this game, it's likely that the players will be facing FWA troops. The Erebus is a big ship and the players would be wise to chose avoidance rather than confrontation. Going in guns blazing will probably result in the party's extermination as they face professional soldiers, not desperate thugs. Brains and roleplaying will get them through this adventure rather than brawn.

The game elements should be carefully layered, rather than everything played out at once. The players should be woken gently, given them enough time to realise that something is wrong and to notice the missing Sawtooth. To begin investigating the ghost ship for a little, perhaps noticing a few traces of Ghoul, and then finally the FWA troops arrive.

GAME INFORMATION 1

The players will begin the game when they are woken from their Cryosleep. At first everything will seem normal, but as they slowly recover from the hibernation, and get themselves prepared, they may realise that they have woken too early. A week too early. Also they may notice that two spare Cryopods in the same room have their doors wide open, tubes hang unused and the life support gel is all over the floor. Looks like Stowaways.

Player Options 1

Search the ship:

Alison and Khalid have already left the Merchant Venturer (MV) but they will have left their traces. Various spot hidden and search roles can be used to spot the following.

- Quickly eaten food from the kitchen. Unwashed dishes, etc. Plus about 2 weeks worth of rations have been stolen.

- Some weapons and ammo are missing from the armoury. A pistol, x3 clips, some grenades, and, if the players have them, a rifle or a SMG with x3 clips gone. If the players have any funky weaponry, that's easy to steal, then Alison has got her hands on it. Unless the player made a point of securing it (She may give it back if the players become allies.)
- The shower has been used recently.
- Inventory check: They won't find much missing, save for two space suits, plus some weapons. Two portable generators, oxygen supplies. Nothing of value has been taken and the cargo is still in its place.
- However, the Sawtooth is missing from the hanger. The hanger doors closed automatically when it left.

Going to the Bridge:

If the players go to the bridge, they will note that the ship is about due to jump back into F-Space in 15 minutes of the players spotting the signal on the control deck. Canceling the jump is a relatively simple matter of flipping up a small plastic cover on the main flight console and pressing the cancel button, which will power down the jump engines safely.

A sensor skill roll will show that there is a large object, approx 1400 km from the Merchant Venturer Port side. A sensor skill rolls will identify the only active power source is the Sawtooth. It has clamped itself to the side of the ship. A simple pilot roll can easily turn the ship to head in that direction.

When the players are close enough to the dark object in space, turning the ship and hitting the floodlights will reveal the Erebus drifting silently in space. There are no obvious signs of damage, power or life.

Scans and sensors will pick up the engine signal of the Sawtooth, which is actually clamped to the side of the Erebus near an airlock. Directing the floodlights will show up the craft and the open airlock. If the players have a remote pilot system set up on the Sawtooth, then Alison has shut it down. At some point, the floodlight will show the FWA logo and the name: Erebus.

Know roll: FWA characters get a +10% on this roll. The Erebus: give the players Investigators Handout #1 (Investigators Handout #2 can be handed out when the players meet the FWA soldiers.)

Player Options 2

At this point, the players are confronted with several choices:

Go and get the shuttle:

They will need to move the MV close enough to facilitate a space walk to the shuttle. A process fraught with its own dangers. Skill rolls will need to be made. Failure may indicate that the players either lose control and begin to tumble out into space, perhaps with a chance of

rescuing themselves or rescue by a fellow player/NPC. Or, if tethered, then they become entangled, or something goes critically wrong with the tether.

The Sawtooth has not been locked, and it's an easy matter of getting inside and then unclamping the shuttle and flying it back to the MV.

Investigating the Ship/Chasing the Stowaways:

Then, the players should be given time to work through the upper levels of the ship and get a feeling for what happened. The players may encounter the two stowaways at the main computer core trying to jury rig the system to operate on the stolen portable generator (See the Computer Core section for more details.)

Player Option 3

Getting Out of Dodge:

The players may decide to simply cut their losses and get out of the area. No problem with that, as such. However, once the Missouri has arrived at the area, it will kill the two stowaways, destroy the Erebus and then continue tracking the MV. Captain Crane's orders are clear: all evidence is to be cleared up...

GAME INFORMATION 2

When the Missouri arrives

To make life complicated, the Missouri will arrive on the scene at some point in the game. Two Razorback (see below) dropships will be launched with a squad of twenty men aboard each ship. One will attempt to board the Erebus, the other the MV. The Shuttle heading for the Erebus will attempt to clamp itself to the Airlock one (Next to the Sawtooth.) Captain Crane will then introduce himself (Via the comms) and threaten anyone aboard the MV with destruction if they do not open the hanger doors.

If any players still aboard the MV do not comply, the FWA militia will try to blast their way through one of the airlocks, or hangers. Once aboard, the squads will use small group tactics. I.E split up into 4 squads of 5: They will be careful and will move by the numbers. 2 in front 3 covering, move forward to a new section, then secure. They have been told by Captain Crane that the crew of the Merchant Venturer are known pirates and looters.

Outraged by the desecration of ship, held as a sacred sacrifice for the FWA freedom, they are eager to encounter the players and mete out some rough justice. Lt Torres is with the Erebus squad.

When and how the Missouri arrives, is up to the Keeper in regard to game tensions. Though, it is suggested that it occurs sometime after the players first encounter the stowaways and start to see hints that there something living on the ship (The Ghoul.) When the troopers arrive, they should arrive with a bang.

GAME INFORMATION 3

The Erebus, Basic Assumptions

The Erebus is a large ship full of empty, but perfectly preserved rooms. To save time and space (and my own sanity), I have only described the most important areas of the ship from a gaming point of view. The ship has no power, no oxygen and no gravity. The players will need spacesuits to stay alive and will have to move around in zero g. They have no shuttle, so they will be limited to what they can take with them (Man portable objects). Unless the players come up with an ingenious way of moving goods across the gulf of space.

The Erebus is still relatively sound, even if the ravages of drifting through space have caused some carbon scoring on the hull plating and the occasional shredded tile. The ship is well equipped and much of its equipment is still intact. Space suits, oxygen packs, rations etc are all freely available. There is enough equipment available for the players, fire extinguisher, medical equipment, chemicals for industrial work purposes, wires, electronic components and parts. There are even portable generators and battery packs available.

Skilled PC's could jury rig a variety of items up to these generators to get them working (Like the medical equipment in the med bay.) With the correct skill rolls and some imagination.

Repairing the vessel is impossible, as the damage done to the life support and the engines would require dry dock facilities to repair. The original saboteurs planned to tow the vessel to UEF, then sell it. Not fix it up. However, it may be possible to make small repairs using their own, or purloined equipment. They may also be able to jury rig the lights of a particular corridor, open sealed doors etc. They will need a separate power source to do this, but, as mentioned above, there are generators available on the ship.

Note: The maps are concerned with the areas that the players can enter. Much of the ship is sealed engine compartments, armoured areas and generally full of things that make the ship go. For example, Deck one has relatively few areas of human access. Others, like the Hangers and the holds, take up much more of that areas space. Hence the differences in map sizes for some decks.



Inside the Ship:

The ship has mostly been drifting through space and the moisture that was in the atmosphere has turned to ice. Beautiful leaf patterns of ice can be found on most surfaces and some of the air conditioned vents have completely frozen over. The ship should have an eerie just left feel about everything, odd little touches of humanity should creep in unexpected places, a child's drawing taped next to a console, some ones pictures, etc. Many items were secured prior to entering F-Space and as such, only a handful of objects drift freely in the zero G. Everything is in darkness and torches will be needed.

Deck one:

1: Bridge.

The bridge is a standard military bridge of the FWA. With severally areas for specialist crew. It is functional and basic. Normally it would be alive with data info, comms, people and the buzz of a busy ship. However, it all lies dead, and empty. A cup of coffee, its contents frozen, rests near a bridge console.

2: Captains room

The captains work space. In the desk can be found a bottle of whiskey and two glasses, pictures of the captains family can be seen on the desk. A replica sabre hangs on the far wall from the desk. While a replica of a 19th century British naval captain's sword. It is still a sharp sword very capable of doing its job. (1d8+1) In the adjoining room is the Captains state room with bedroom, shower and reading area.

3: Navigation Room

When this craft was fully operational, this room was a glittering array of holographic displays, AI interfacing and lots of expensive computer tech. Now it is empty and dark. The walls covered in the black holographic meshing that would have once carried bright images.

4: Bridge armoury

This was a separate armoury designed to be used by the crew in case of mutiny, or boarding actions that may have cut them off from the main armoury. The doors to the thick armoured plated doors to the armoury are already open. The armoury is completely empty. The ghoul cleared out the armoury years ago to prevent borders/scavengers arming themselves up with the ships weapons.

5: Rest area

This was the crew's rest area during periods of prolonged activity. There is a drinks machine, and food dispenser. Most of the food is packed for vacuum and it is still fresh and edible.

6: Escape Pods

This area is full of 4 man crew non powered escape pods. The firing mechanism uses a concussive explosive charge that does not require main power to jettison. The life support pods have independent power supplies that will switch on when the manual release is fired. The manual release is inside the escape pods.

NEW HORIZON, scenario pack MV2.0

7: Main Airlock

This is the main crew boarding/departure Airlock. This is the airlock forced open by the stowaways (They used one of the stolen generators and hacking into the local control system. The generator is still attached to the console.) The Sawtooth has been clamped less than 10 metres from this airlock.

This is also the area that the FWA militia will use to board the Erebus.

8: Decompression chamber

9: Equipment storage and dressing area

This room is full of lockers and benches for changing into space suits. There are several suits hanging from racks (18), and many more can be found in the crew lockers. Also there are several oxygen packs (20) and plenty of emergency space suit repair equipment in this section.



Deck Two: Crew Section

General:

The Erebus ships had clearly Designated troop and crew areas: This section is the crew area. It tends to be less impersonal than the troop quarters and the crew quarters are smaller, but more personalised.

1: Crew quarters

Basic and practical, most have some signs of personalisation, but all follow a similar layout. The doors are blast doors and can be manually closed and locked. AP: 15 HP20

2: Common area

The common area has tables, sofas entertainment systems and food dispensers.

3: Eating area

4: Toilets

5: Showers

6: Medical bay

This is one of the main medical infirmaries aboard ship. It has a separate surgery suite, life support systems and a wide range of medical equipment and medicines.

7: Crew Cryopods

This section of Cryopod was designed to act independently of the main Cryopod chambers, by using a different power circuit and set to waken the crew a few hours before the marines. Each of the eight cryopod

contains the gel encased bodies of the crew. While well preserved all of the bodies show signs of decomposing.

Something odd: The Ghoul has decorated the Cryopods in this area with coloured paper, pictures and personal items of the crew.

Opening the Cryopod needs a mechanical repair roll or brute force (AP: 6, HP: 15). Opening the door will result in an explosion of liquid from the stale life support gel. As it is in a vacuum, it will bubble as it explodes covering the space with the floating gel balls. It will only take a few minutes for the gel to freeze. It's disgusting, a little disgusting but not dangerous. The body inside the Cryopod will start to drift out of the Cryopod only to be anchored into place by the wires and tubes that used to keep the person alive. SAN loss: 1/1d3.

8: Computer Core

The two stowaways will be encountered in the main engineering section, setting up a generator. (Deck 6) The players may hear them working as they approach the area (Listen Roll.) The stowaways will attempt to escape the players initially.

Though Alison will be prepared to shot and kill the players. She may try to persuade the players by given them the same sob story as she gave Khalid. She will even tell them that she is prepared to let the players have the full salvage rights to the Erebus (To Khalid's protests.) See stats section for further details.

If the players go for the shoot first approach, then Alison will return fire but attempt a fighting retreat. She will throw some grenades and then try to vanish in the dark corridors of the ship; she is prepared to leave Khalid behind. She wants to access the data core of the ship to find the Cryopod log to look for Martin Whites Pod. (Pod 145)

During the search for the Cryopod, she will also download files from the ship board CCTV showing Khalid and his cronies damaging the ship systems. Relevant tech rolls to notice that the tech crew is deliberately sabotaging the ship. If pressured Khalid will crack and confess the truth.



Deck Three: Trooper section

Deck Three is the communal soldiers' area.

1: Barrack rooms

Standard military barracks, bunk beds, steel lockers and the like. Much of the soldier's kit is in these areas and light fingered players could steal a lot of valuables here.

NEW HORIZON, scenario pack MV2.0

However, if the FWA marines find out that the players have looted this area, they will be... upset...

Spot Hidden: Some of the lockers have been opened and emptied. This was the Ghoul collecting objects to decorate the Cryopods.

2: Showers

Large communal showers that stand dark and empty.

3: Eating area

This room is full of chairs and tables. While the tables are bolted to the floor, some other chairs drift lazily through the room. This area has sealed units in the kitchen areas and many contain items that can be used as improvised weapons such as knives, forks and toasters. There are enough chemical cleaners in the kitchen space for characters with excellent explosive skills to make bombs.

4: Gym

A still relatively up to date gym, full of the usual training equipment.

5: Armoury

This is the main armoury. It is a gun nuts dream. However, the android has a cruel sense of humour and has spent many long weeks removing firing pins, blocking barrels, etc. The weapons have only scrap value.

The grenades have had the explosives removed. Then he put everything back. It's likely the players won't notice unless they make the point of checking the equipment before using it. He has also removed the body armour. He hid the body armour and the bullets deep in the ventilation system. He covered that area with fresh water from the supply and now it all lies buried under ice.

Why did the android do this? He knows that there is a danger of being boarded by pirates and looters and did not want a lightly armed boarding team to suddenly become a heavily armed and armoured boarding team. But what happened to all those cool military explosives? See the section the Ghouls Stat write up for further details...

6: Shooting range

Shooting range. Where people shot, across a range. ☺

7: Medical Area

In this place, the players will find most of the tools and medical equipment necessary for basic first aid. As the power is out the really advanced equipment is now only so much junk. However, if the player has strong technical repair skills and some portable generators, they may be able to jury rig something.

Deck Four: Storage

This area is full of the vast storage and cargo holds. These are large silent areas filled with a maze of boxes and containers. The Erebus was carrying a supply run of prefabricated buildings and the main hull is full of them.

There is not much in this space except for a few load lifters, a lift and a heavy crane like device in the ceiling. In cargo hold two, the operator cab of the ceiling load

lifter is The Ghouls resting place. It's only accessible via a long climb up a steel ladder. The cab, which is 10 metres from ground level, has had its console and seat ripped out. There is some bedding strapped to the floor.

Sometimes, the Ghoul hibernates up here as it is out of the way and safe. Above the operating cab there is an easy five metres jump (easy for the Ghoul anyway) to an open ventilation shaft that the Ghoul often uses to explore his domain.



Deck Five: Cryopods

1: Showers and clothing area

The area is used to clean up after Cryosleep.

2: Medical Suite

Standard first aid stations to insure that the awaked marines are healthy.

3: Cryo chambers

These are large rooms containing fifty Cryopod each. The cryopods are large black and chunky. Each one is upright rather than laying down. The Cryopods are in regimental rows like soldiers standing on parade. Attached to each Cryopod area is a monitoring station.

The Ghoul has worked hard decorating the Cryopod and making the dead look pretty. Across some of the upright a message has been scrawled in on the glass cover of the Cryopod by the Ghoul:

"It is in the tears of the grieving that war is measured."

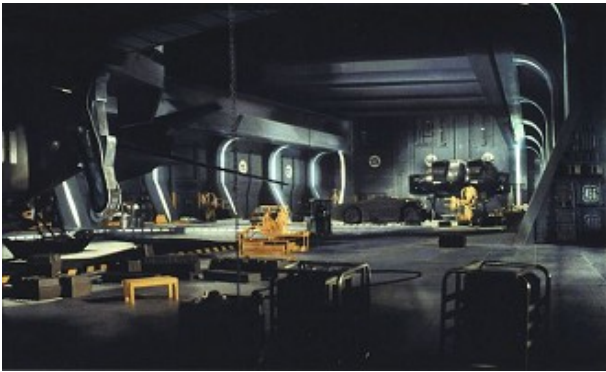
In one of the rooms (Cryo room 3) is Cryopod 145. Inside Martin White lays dead. The PDA wrapped in a plastic bag to protect it from the gel.

■ Finding the PDA.

The PDA is a decade old model, which will need to be charged before use as its battery is dead but still compatible with modern battery chargers. This will take about ten minutes. The PDA, has several locks on it. First is the level 1 lock. This allows basic access and use of the PDA. Level 2 lock is Martins personal files, movies, private emails, etc. Level 3 lock is the fully encrypted files. Each level is a minus 10% on skill rolls that attempt to hack into the system.

■ The Secret Data:

This section of file in the level 3 section is further encrypted and will need to be deciphered by an expert. The files have voice recordings, data files, meeting times, transaction reports from the UEF agent that was intercepted by Martin. Many of the files refer to Admiral Jackson (Now senator Jackson.)



Deck Six:

1: Dropship Hangers

10 FWA dropships lay dormant hanging from racks in the ceiling. They all still have enough power and fuel to fly. However, players will have to find a way to release the ships safely from there clamps. Then find a way to open the drop doors in the floor.

Dropships are not designed for long hauls, but they will have enough fuel to get the players back to the Merchant Venturer. However, the gunners on the Missouri may have other plans...

2: Main Hanger

x2 Sawtooths.

Some wheeled troop transporters that would be loaded onto the Sawtooth. All the ships are fully functional and armed. However, the main doors are sealed shut and the players will need to get the main power back on before they could open the doors.

3: Spacecraft Armoury

This large space is full of missiles, bombs and other deadly equipment. There are load lifters and cranes. The Ghoul has booby trapped this area with a crude bomb, he has also wired several large torpedoes to the bomb. A

generator is hooked up to the device, essentially a stack of explosives in the centre of the armoury. All the Ghoul needs to do is switch the generator on. The live charge will detonate the explosives and the torpedoes. The resulting explosion will rip the ship in half.

GAME ENDS

1: The Golden Option

Somehow, the players kill or immobilize the ghoul. Become allies with the troopers and the FWA Assassin. Stephen Crane and his crew are killed or arrested. The PDA of evidence is found and they can all fly happily into the sunset. (Maybe even holding hands.)

Outcomes

The players will be heavily rewarded (exact amount in FWA currency at GM's discretion.) by the FWA and feted as heroes.

The Missouri will tow the vessel back to FWA space. Senator Jackson and several cronies will be arrested and disgraced. Cruel keepers may have the UEF hearing about the players little adventure. The UEF may wonder why a UEF registered ship and its crew are playing FWA folk hero. Smuggling just got a lot harder...

Option: Senator Jackson escapes justice. He flees into space. He still has a lot of contacts and a lot of money. The players have just made a powerful enemy...

2: The Escape Ending

The players somehow escape the situation. In this eventuality, it is very likely that Stephen Crane will carry out his orders and destroy the Erebus. Alison and Khalid will be killed. Captain Crane may then pursue the players.

3: The Sellers Ending

The players have a ship to sell. The UEF will simply try to take the FWA military vessel off them. The FWA will arrest them, and Pirates/gangsters may want to get their hands on the vessel. Selling it will be a lot of trouble, and an adventure itself.

THE END.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to John Ossoway for yet again letting me mess with his universe, and his suggestions re this game.

To Dick Porter for bouncing ideas off and general proof reading.

Ta!

APPENDIX A: NPC CHARACTERISTICS

Statistical profiles are gathered here to enable the Keeper to copy or print out these pages separately from the campaign to provide a handy reference when running this chapter.

CAPTAIN STEPHEN CRANE

An apparently charming Stetson wearing, cigar smoking psychopath aged 48. Rogue FWA naval captain firmly in the pay of Jackson.

STR: 14 Move: 3
CON: 15 HP: 29
SIZ: 14 Dex SR: 3
INT: 12
POW: 13
DEX: 14
APP: 09
BRA: 16

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	60	+0	1d3+1d4
Knife	1	45	+0	1d3+2+1d4
M11P	3	50	+0	1d10+2*
M29 TAR	3/5/10	55	+2	2d8**

*10mm pistol, (20 rds) 2 clips

**grenade x4

Armour:

CBA 8 pts

Skills:

Knife: 45%, Dodge: 40%, Listen: 45%, SMG: 45%, Throw: 45%, Drive: 47%, Streetwise: 45%, Hide 46%, Spot Hidden: 45%, Tactics: 45%, Pilot Space ship: 45%, Zero-G: 45%, Starship Gunnery: 65%.

Appearance:

Average height, but stocky. He is a pale skinned man with a completely shaven head and a goatee beard. He wears his uniform with pride and it is always immaculately turned out. Across his left cheek, can be seen a swathe of black tattooed lines that sweep up from his neck to his cheek. These are markings that are common on his colony.

Tactics:

Crane is a man with a taste for atrocity. A brutal killer responsible for the cold blooded murder of UEF marines and citizens during the colonial wars. He has escaped these horrors with his reputation intact with the help of Senator Jackson. The senator wanted someone he could relay on to do what was necessary, and has bound him close to him by helping his career and protecting him from any potential FWA investigations.

He is wanted by the UEF for several war crimes. In the initial boarding, he will stay aboard the Missouri. His crew of ten are largely loyal to him. However, the 40 FWA militia are an independent unit that is not officially under his command. He doesn't trust their Lt and has

kept the details of the mission secret. Though he plans to arrange their deaths on the return journey to the FWA.

CAPTAIN CRANE'S CREW (x10)

STR: 11 Move: 3
CON: 10 HP: 22
SIZ: 12 Dex SR: 3
INT: 10
POW: 11
DEX: 12
APP: 11
BRA: 13

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	60	+0	1d3
Knife	1	45	+0	1d3+2
M11P	3	40	+0	1d10+2*
M29 TAR	3	40	+2	2d8**

*10mm pistol, (20 rds) 2 clips

**grenade x4

Armour:

CBA 8 pts

Skills:

Dodge: 40%, Listen: 45%, SMG: 40%, Throw: 45%, Drive: 47%, Streetwise: 45%, Hide 46%, Spot Hidden: 45%, Tactics: 45%, Zero-G: 45%, Pilot Starship: 65%, Starship Gunnery: 65%.

Tactics:

These men are not trained soldiers but do have some training in weapons use. They are ruthless and loyal to their Captain. However, they are not suicidal and won't fight against overwhelming odds.

FWA MILITIA (x20)

STR: 13 (x2) Move: 3
CON: 13 HP: 26
SIZ: 13 Dex SR: 3
INT: 11
POW: 13
DEX: 14
APP: 12
BRA: 13

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	60	+0	2d3+1d6
Knife	1	45	+0	1d3+2+1d6
M11P	3	50	+0	1d10+2*
M29 TAR	3/5/10	55	+2	2d8**

*10mm pistol, (20 rds) 2 clips

**grenade x4

Armour:

PAPA 'Scout' 12 pts

Skills:

Dodge: 40%, Listen: 45%, SMG: 50%, Throw: 45%, Drive: 47%, Streetwise: 45%, Hide 46%, Spot Hidden: 45%, Tactics: 45%.

Tactics:

Trained and professional, they will use organised group tactics and will fight bravely. All of these men are devoted to their Lt and like the Lt initially believe the players to be pirates and looters.

LT MIGUEL “Green jackets” TORRES

A veteran unit of FWA militia aged 28.

STR: 16 (x2) Move: 3
CON: 15 HP: 31
SIZ: 16 Dex SR: 2
INT: 14
POW: 15
DEX: 17
APP: 12
BRA: 17

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	60	+0	2d3+2d6
Knife	1	55	+0	1d3+2+2d6
M11P	3	70	+0	1d10+2*
M29 TAR	3/5/10	65	+2	2d8**

*10mm pistol, (20 rds) 2 clips

**grenade x4

Armour:

PAPA ‘Scout’ 12 pts

Skills:

Dodge: 65%, Listen: 55%, SMG: 65%, Throw: 55%, Drive: 47%, Streetwise: 45%, Hide 46%, Spot Hidden: 45%, Tactics: 60%.

Appearance:

He is of Hispanic origin, tall, good looking and athletically built.

Notes:

Lantern jawed hero of the FWA militia, he was ordered to assist Captain Crane by one of the senators Jackson cronies, simply as they were the nearest unit on the Missouri path.

Could be an enemy or a good friend. Very much depends on players interaction with him. Captain Crane has kept the precise nature of the mission a secret from Lt Torres. Crane has informed him that it is a simple matter of intercepting some pirates that have found the Erebus and plan to plunder it. Naturally, if Crane is successful in his mission, he will insure that his ship suffers a serious malfunction on the return journey and only his crew will have time to get to the escape pods...

Tactics:

He is cool under pressure and has a logical streak. He is every inch the career soldier. However he is no fool and if he discovers Jackson’s complicity, he will be prepared to arrest and/or kill the captain and his crew. If this happens, he will use the ships autopilot to return home.

ALISON BAKER

Real name unknown. Deep cover agent of the FWA government aged 34.

STR: 12 Move: 3
CON: 15 HP: 28
SIZ: 13 Dex SR: 2
INT: 15
POW: 17
DEX: 18
APP: 14
BRA: 14

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	70	+0	1d3
Knife	1	65	+0	1d3+2
M11P	3	70	+0	1d10+2*

*10mm pistol, (20 rds) 2 clips

Grenade x4, plus any other weapon purloined from the players.

Armour:

CBA 8 pts

Skills:

Dodge: 80%, Rifle: 64%, Listen: 65%, SMG: 70%, Throw: 65%, Drive: 47%, Streetwise: 75%, Hide 80%, Spot Hidden: 55%, Tactics: 55%.

Description:

Tall, athletic, blond with model good looks. Ruthless, superb actress, and someone who is very well trained. This is reflected in her stats and skills. She is happy to use the players. She is not loyal to them and does not care if they live or die.

Notes:

Her Mission is to find the Erebus, and any evidence linking Jackson to the tragedy that befell the ship (the data pad), contact HQ and await pickup. To do this she tracked down and made contact with Khalid.

Arrest or executions at her own discretion.

KHALID RAFI

A slimy weasel of a man aged 50.

STR: 09 Move: 3
CON: 10 HP: 20
SIZ: 10 Dex SR: 2
INT: 11
POW: 09
DEX: 10
APP: 07
BRA: 08

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
----------	-----	----	----	-----

None: Alison won’t give him a gun.

Armour:

CBA 8 pts

NEW HORIZON, scenario pack MV2.0

Skills:

Handgun: 30%, Knife: 25%, Fist: 40%, Dodge: 50%, Listen: 45%, Streetwise: 45%, Hide 46%, Spot Hidden: 45%, Explosives: 45%, Electronic Security: 65%, Programming 50%, Electronics. 45%.

Notes:

The only surviving member of the original saboteurs (hired by Jackson.) of the Erebus, this man is a complete and utter weasel. Cowardly, greedy, selfish and self pitying when things do not go in his favour. He is capable of murder, but only when the odds are very much in his favour. He is quite likely to betray the players to Crane if he thinks it would save his life. He planned to kill and betray Alison. However, he is becoming a little scared of her as she has dropped her "worried sister act," and appears to be turning into some kind of expert in infiltration.

SENATOR ANDREW JACKSON

Traitor, liar and cold blooded murderer.

Notes:

He will stop at nothing to prevent the discovery of his involvement in the Erebus tragedy.

THE GHOUL

Crazed 4th generation android that would enjoy wearing the player's entrails.

STR: 17 Move: 3
CON: 16 HP: 30
SIZ: 14 Dex SR: 2
INT: 16
EDU: 11
DEX: 16
APP: 10
BRA: 10
HF: 1/1d4 to see the creatures twisted shape

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
hooked limbs	2	45	+0	1d4+1+1d4
Metal clawed hds	2	55	+0	1d4+1d4
TASER (left Clw)	1	45	+0	1d6+2d6*

*stun

Armour:

PAPA 'Scout' 12 pts

Skills:

Fist: 60%, Dodge: 40%, Cackle disconcertingly: 65%, Listen: 45%, Throw: 45%, Stealth: 75%, Hide 75%, Spot Hidden: 45%.

Description:

The Ghoul is the author's name for a creature that no longer has a name for itself. Once the ship's dutiful android, the Ghoul has developed a bizarre interpretation of its own purpose. This strange creature has lived a solitary life amongst the dead and the detritus. He has become mad. The trauma of the loss of the crew, essentially in his charge while the slept in their Cryopods and the general damage of nearly a decade of constant self repair have rendered it insane and no longer bound by the three laws. It has wrapped itself in a fantasy where it now sees itself the guardian of the dead and that the corpses in the Cryopods are sleeping souls making the long journey to the afterlife. Over the decade, it has struggled to survive. To do so, it has mutilated itself with constant self repair and jury rigging. The outer now reflects the torments of its inner self. Strange limbs have been attached to help it move through the zero g, giving in a twisted spider like look. The organic components of its flesh have been burnt and charred away, leaving an insane grinning face with a mop of wiry sticking hair. Its eyes have been gouged out and replaced with UV sensors that see perfectly in the dark. (It can be startled by bright light.) Attached to its body are the artefacts of the dead, items it took from the corpse as payment for ferrying them across space. This may be pictures of children and loved ones, jewellery and sometimes pieces of bone and rotting flesh.

Tactics:

Hit and run mostly. The Ghoul will jump out of air ducts, pulling people into the darkness. The Ghoul can also set booby traps around the ship if it feels the need to do so. The Last surprise: If things are going badly for it, it will attempt to flee to the main hanger. There it will enter the hanger armoury, which full of missiles and high explosives; it has also brought all the explosives from the two other armouries and has set up a disturbingly large bomb. This bomb, if ignited, will take out most of the lower hangers and upper decks.



APPENDIX B: HANDOUTS

INVESTIGATORS HANDOUT 1

The Erebus:

Formerly a UEF Gallant class Troop Transporter captured by the FWA, the Erebus has fascinated those that live on the Cluster for close to a decade. During the Colonial War, the troop transporter left its space dock and then vanished out of history. Approx 300 plus FWA militia troops, and the ships standing crew, were all lost. The tragedy of this incident sent shock waves across the FWA community.

At first, the ship was assumed destroyed by UEF action. But, soon after the war, the UEF denied the claim and stated that they had no record of one of their warships making contact with the Erebus. The UEF have never been shy about admitting to destroying FWA warships. So if they are lying, it must be for a reason.

As with all mysteries, the Erebus has gathered its own popular culture. Films, series, holos, data streaming, horror movies and endless documentaries, all claiming to have the final answer clutter up the entertainment channels. Conspiracy theories also surround the lost ship. Government plots, alien encounters, experimental F drives that sent the ship into some other plain of existence, and even time travel, have all been claimed by some nut or other. The reality is no one really knows what happened to the ship. Until today. Here it is as large as life; just sitting their silent and dead in the black.

What it all means is unclear, but one thing is certain. Some people would pay a lot of money to solve the mystery.

INVESTIGATORS HANDOUT 2

The FWA Militia:

Born out of the desperate struggle of the Colonial War, the FWA has earned the grudging admiration and respect of the UEF armed Forces. It has grown, from humble beginnings as a loosely affiliated band of freedom fighters, to become a slick, well trained and flexible fighting force. The FWA has striven hard to overcome the obstacles of UEF blockades, fifth columnists and limited resources. They have responded to the challenge with several innovative and creative military solutions.

FWA Militia: 101

Recruitment and Service.

Each Militia unit is recruited from individual colonies. This is done to strengthen the morale and fighting spirit of each unit.

Regular service

Military service is mandatory for all FWA citizens over the age of 18, although exceptions may be made on, physical or psychological grounds. Citizens are expected to serve for three years in the FWA militia. Citizens can then elect to continue service beyond that point as a volunteer. No one can apply for the Officer Training Program (OTP) unless they have completed their 3 years regular service as a minimum. The Militia believe in promoting from the ranks.

Reserve service

Once mandatory regular service has been completed, citizens can be called for reserve service of up to one month annually, until the age of 43-45. After this point, citizens may continue by volunteering, but most over the age of 45 will serve in support capacities. Reservists are expected to be available for service at any time. Most reservists will have some military equipment with them at home, and some means of communication with the outside world. Combined with the local based recruitment/training policy, then each colony can, in theory, act as a coherent military force on short notice. Reservists may be called for active duty during an emergency. Many soldiers who have served together in active service continue to meet in reserve duty for years after their discharge, causing reserve duty to become a strong bonding experience in FWA society. A well-known FWA joke refers to civilians as soldiers on 11-month furlough.

While the FWA is a democracy, that has careful controls on the power of the military, many powerful people have used their time in the Militia as a strong foundation for their political careers.

INVESTIGATORS HANDOUT 3

Missouri

FWA – Warlord Class Destroyer

The warlord class destroyer is one of the most modern destroyers available to the FWA fleet. The former EnerTek ship yards have now been turned over to production of military spacecraft. The design ethic of many of these newer vessels encapsulates the “always ready” versatility of the FWA militia.

The Warlord Class is fast, well armed and armoured and it's a warship that can hold its own with some of the more powerful vessels of the UEF navy. Capable of carrying out a wide spectrum of offensive, defensive and standard operational mission parameters, the Warlord has become the work horse of the FWA fleet. The ship's hangar bay typically houses two dropships, as well as a several unmanned ships and satellites.

General Characteristics

Primary Function:	Destroyer
Contractor:	Fleet Systems
Power Plant:	Fusion
Propulsion	
Realspace:	Reactionless Displacement
F-Space:	Vampire-3 F-Drive
Length:	345 metres
Height:	40 metres
Beam:	35 metres
Max Velocity	
Realspace:	2g
Interstellar:	0.47LY/day (EST)
Max Payload:	800 tons
Cargo Configurations:	Varies widely: this particular mission holds 2 dropships plus cryopods for 50 passengers.
Crew:	8
Sensors	
Space: Passive	2000km
Space: Active	1000km
Perimeter Alert:	20,000km
Comm Range:	3,000km
Standard Weapon Systems:	2x ASAT-100 Predator launchers; 2x ASAT-120 Balmung launchers; 2x 30mm Rail Cannon turrets; 2x 40MW Free Electron Laser turrets; 2x 80mW Infrared Laser turrets. 10x STGBMs.

Game Stats

Velocity: Cruise	07
: Full Thrust	10
Manoeuvre:	-5 (-10%)
Autopilot:	70%
Battle Computer:	2
Initiative Modifier:	-3
Stealth:	2
ECM:	2
Fire Control:	5
Armor Value:	40

INVESTIGATORS HANDOUT 4

Combat Shuttle

FWA – Razorback Mark II Combat Assault and troop transportation Vehicle.

The Razorback is one of the newest assault shuttles to come hot off FWA fleet Systems production lines. Ostensibly built to replace the numerous Mark One Razorbacks that acted as troop transportation. Primarily designed for ship to ship boarding actions, the vessel is fast, well armed and armored. The Razorback also has a modular design and the internal arrangements of the ship can be easily altered to match a wide range of mission specifications (Medical, troop/vehicle transportation and combat assault missions.)

The shuttle is primarily designed for space warfare, but can be used as a standard orbital craft and dropship with enough fighter support to make of for its lack of maneuverability in atmosphere.

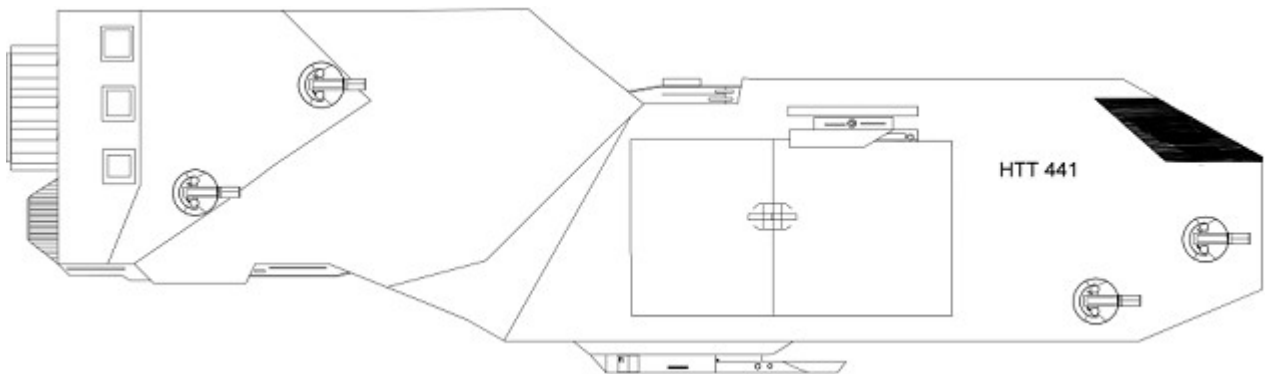
General Characteristics

Primary Function:	Various. Aerospace assault, combat drop and aeromedical evacuation.
Contractor:	Fleet Systems
Power Plant:	Fusion
Propulsion	
Atmospheric:	Scramrockets
Orbital:	Fusion rockets
Length:	17.1 metres
Height:	5.2 metres
Wingspan:	21.7 metres
Max Velocity	
Atmospheric:	Mach 3.7
Orbital:	10g
Flight Ceiling:	Trans-atmospheric
Max Payload:	64 tons
Cargo Configurations:	Combat: maximum of 35 troops Medical evacuation: 15 litters and 2 attendants
Crew:	3 (Pilot, Gunner and Navigator)
Sensors	
Ground:	20km
Space: Passive	2000km
Space: Active	1000km
Perimeter Alert:	20,000km
Comm Range:	3000km
Standard Weapon Systems:	2x AGM-204A TSAMs; 8x Mk 88 120mm SGW; 20x Mk 16 150mm Banshee missiles; 1x 25mm chain cannon; (underslung)

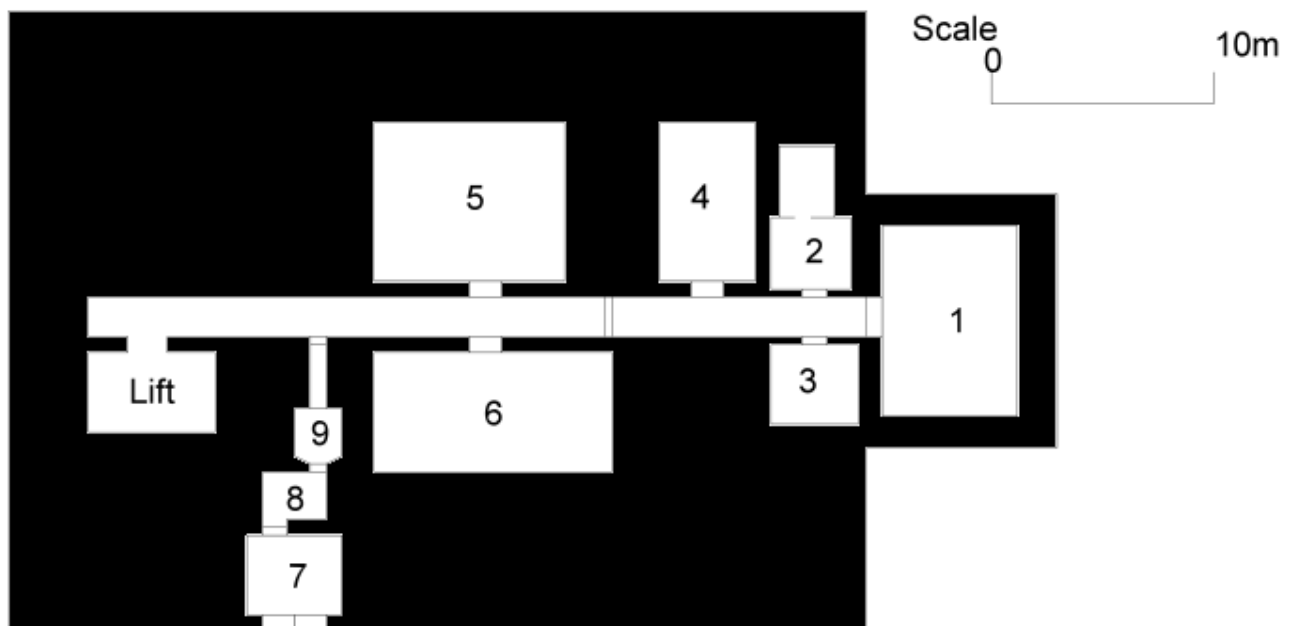
Game Stats

Velocity: Cruise	23
: Afterburn	35
Manoeuvre:	2 (+4%)
Autopilot:	50%
Battle Computer:	1 (+5%)
Initiative Modifier:	3
Stealth:	2
ECM:	3 (-15%)
Fire Control:	5 (+10%)
Armor Value:	18

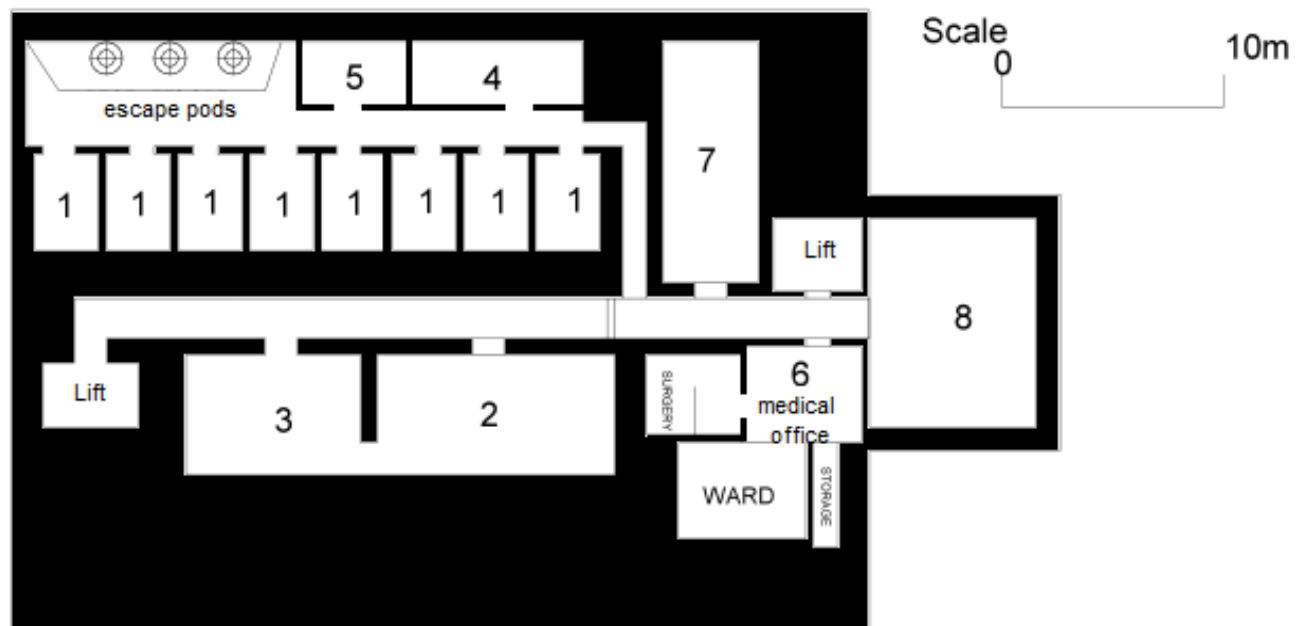
RAZORBACK MARK II COMBAT SHUTTLE



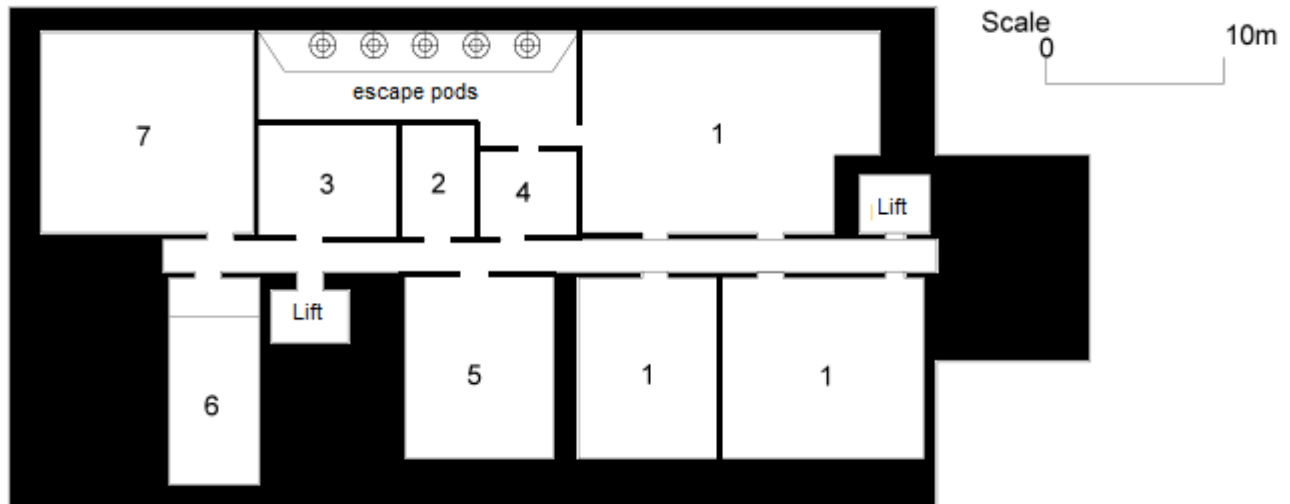
EREBUS DECK 1



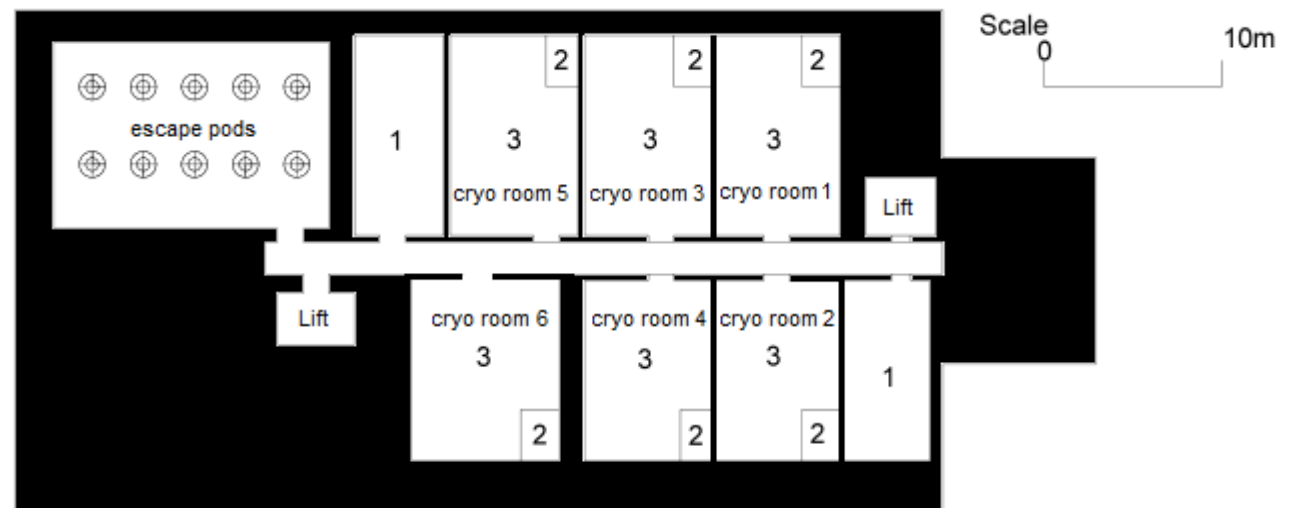
EREBUS DECK 2



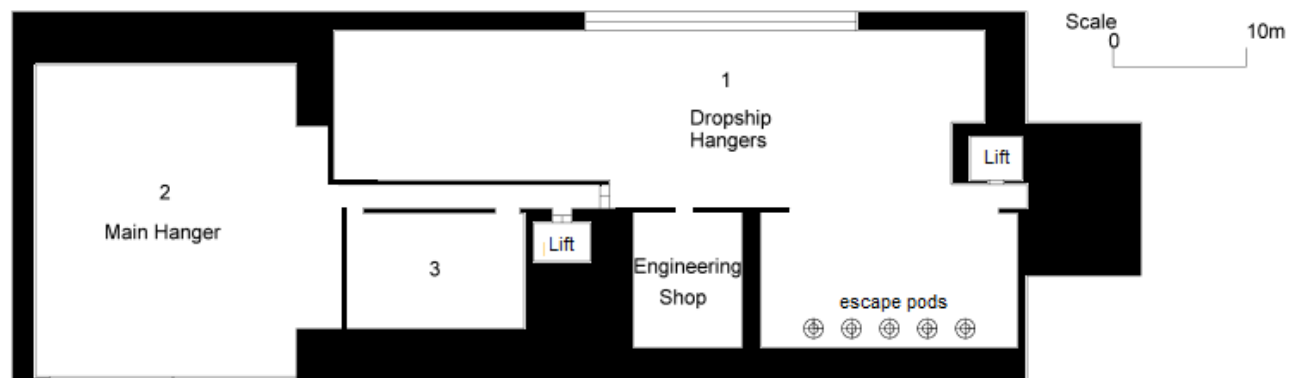
EREBUS DECK 3



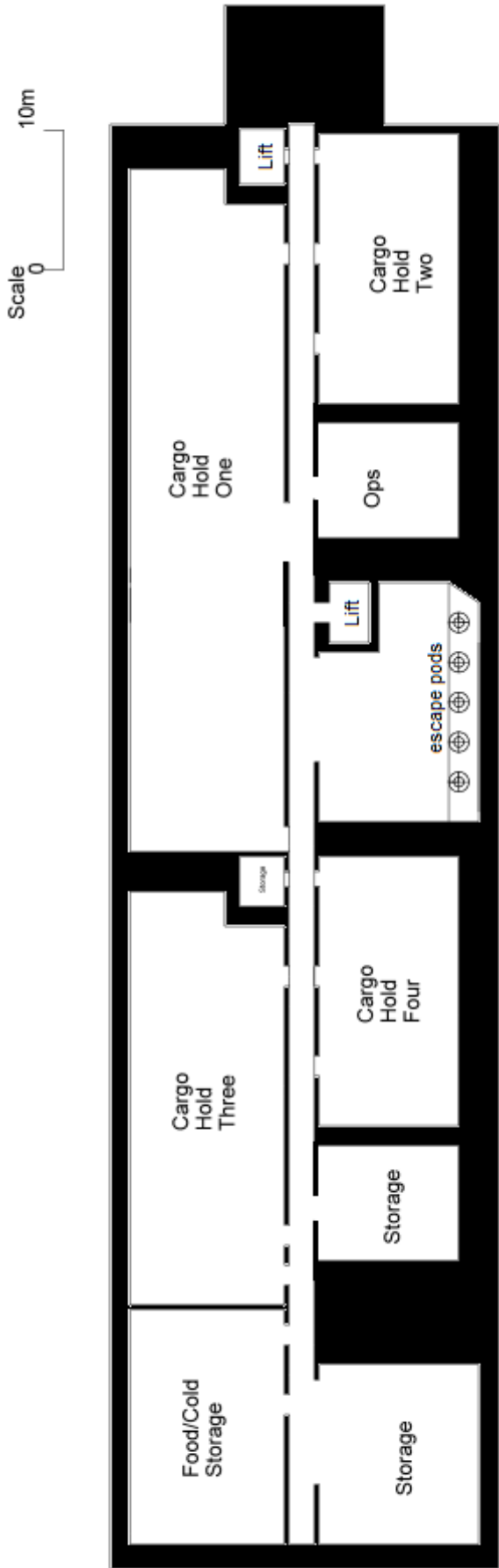
EREBUS DECK 5



EREBUS DECK 6



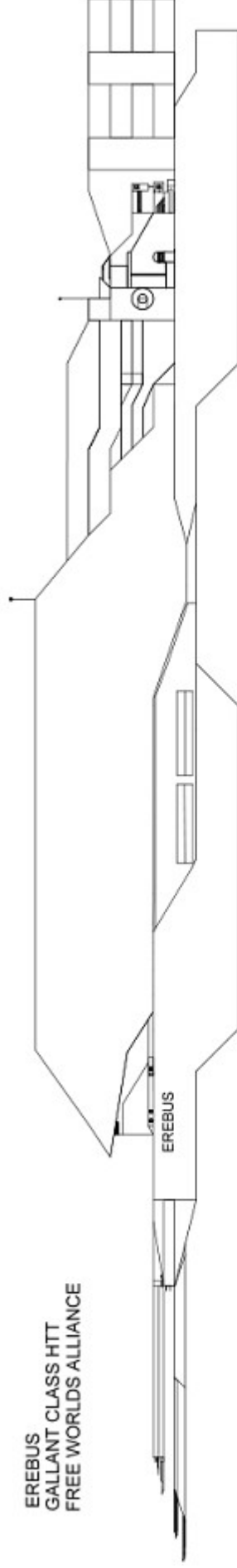
EREBUS DECK 4



The Missouri
Warlord Class Destroyer



EREBUS
GALLANT CLASS HTT
FREE WORLDS ALLIANCE



RazorBack:
Mark II Combat Assault Shuttle



scale 0 50 100m

FATE OF THE TERRA ARAE

by David Bezio

Fate of the Terra Arae is an adventure designed for one GM and four players, although it can be easily modified for more or less. Once the players complete their initial investigation, they must decide how to proceed. The sudden destruction of their ride home adds urgency to their mission. The adventure unfolds as they navigate the challenges presented by the Cappello Nero, the jungles of HD 157890-2, and the drug processing base, all leading to a confrontation with Dr. Scion Fri and Massimo Grello.

INTRODUCTION

Erom checked the cell-level on the last of the forward core data collectors before closing the access panel.

He made his way down the corridor leading to the bridge of the colony ship Terra Arae. His boots clanged noisily on the metal grates, and the echoes amplified the emptiness of the hall.

As Erom entered the bridge, four other men briefly looked up from monitors and workstations, one nodding a casual greeting. The fifth figure, a balding, older man who sat lazily in the Captains chair, didn't stir as he continued to stare out the view port to the vast emptiness of the space before them. After a pause, it was this man, the Captain, which Erom approached.

"Sir, all internal and external systems are check, the flux is stable and is holding strong... we should reach Mu Arae 2 on schedule"

The Captain absorbed the report with indifference, then cast his eyes to Erom for a moment, "And the cargo?"

"The colonists are fine. The cryo-pods are all at 100% and the chamber systems are green"

The Captain nodded and returned his gaze to the view port, "Two more weeks. Lord I'll be glad to be out of this tin can! 15 weeks in space is too long for any man, any sane man at least. Wish I could have slept through the journey like the rest."

Erom and the other 18 crew members all felt the same, but it was the Captain that seemed to feel the strain the most. Perhaps it was his age, or maybe something else. He had spent long hours in the cryo-chamber staring at the pods containing his wife and children lately.

In any case, the journey would soon be over, and they would step foot onto a new world. Mu Arae 2 would be their new beginning, a fresh world granted them by the United Earth Federation back on Earth.

Hallidor Corp had already done the research, and programmed the safe-course to the planet. Soon all their dreams would come true.

An explosion erupted suddenly, lurching the ship and knocking those on the bridge to the floor. The lighting went out and, for a brief moment, before the auxiliary power kicked in, only the distant stars in the view port illuminated the bridge.

Erom was the first on his feet. He dabbing the blood off his forehead with the cuff of his sleeve and began to frantically punch status menus on the screen of the closest control station.

"Get Engineering online!" yelled the Captain, still on his knees as he grabbed the arm of his chair and began to pull himself up, "what the hell was that!?"

Erom turned to the captain, his pale face made even more so by the bleaching color of the auxiliary lighting, "Sir... engineering is gone. We have a hull breach at three locations, and the emergency repair shields are all offline. They're already dead... we're all dead."

THE STORY SO FAR...

Things may have gone on unchanged on HD 157890-2 forever, if not for a chance happening. A rich man, and hobby geologist, Sir David Rupert, had chartered a small ship to take him to HD 157890-3 in the hopes of finding some unique core samples. By mere accident the ships flight path came across the derelict Terra Arae floating in orbit above HD 157890-2. The good knight, realizing the importance of this find, immediately raced to claim a salvage award on the property. As the player characters had acquired a solid reputation for wreck recovery since their adventure on the Erebus, Sir David Rupert immediately called on their services.

The team (the Player Characters plus one Corporate Standard Model Synthetic in the service of Sir David Rupert) was immediately dispatched to the sight for a preliminary reconnaissance. They are to find out as much information as they can about the condition of the ship, and what happened to it and its passengers. When finished, they are to return to Calamity with a full report.

Game Notes

The adventure consists of two basic parts after this Introduction. While there are a few episodes that must take place to progress the adventure, it is mostly open ended. How the players handle most situations are left to their own brilliance (or lack thereof).

In the first part, The Terra Arae, the PCs board the derelict colony ship. There they can begin to piece together the mystery of what happened to the ship, and why it is in orbit around HD 157890-2. They also discover that many of the colonists are still aboard and alive in the cryo-chamber, but many are missing. Just when they realize something fishy is going on their ride home is destroyed. They are forced to stow away on, or take over the Cappello Nero cosca shuttle that has come to the colony ship to transport more colonists down to the planet surface.

In part two, the Players must traverse the Jungles of HD 157890-2, infiltrate the drug processing base, destroy

the Cappello Nero cosca, Rescue the colonist slaves, and put an end to the illegal and immoral activities going on there. They are also very likely to get to the bottom of the mystery of who is responsible for these crimes, and report them to the FWA. Lastly they must acquire a new ship to get them off planet.



THE PLOT OUTLINE

17 years ago

The events in the introductory short story took place 15 years ago. To find out the fate of the Terra Arae and her crew, and why such a fate took place, we must go back 2 years further...

Dr. Scion Fri was a young scientist in the employment of the mega-corporation Hallidor Corp. While ambitious and competent, Dr. Fri was not remarkable in any way. He had been assigned to a planetary research team for 10 years since graduating from The Genetic Science and Technology College of Mars. The planetary research teams were tasked with analyzing Earth-like planets for possibility of colonization. He had been turned down again and again for any reassignment or promotion, and it seemed that he would be stuck in this unrewarding, unglamorous position till the end of his days.

17 years ago Dr. Fri's team was finishing up studies on the remote HD 157890 system. This system was so unremarkable that it was never named further. The HD 157890 system contained a sun and 3 moonless planets, HD 157890-1, HD 157890-2, and HD 157890-3. Planet 1 was nothing but a baked rock surrounded by carbon dioxide. Planet number 3 was a frozen barren dust planet with no notable atmosphere. Most of the research was confined to planet HD 157890-2.

Planet HD 157890-2 was roughly the size of Earth with a climate and atmosphere that could sustain human life. It had extensive oceans and its landmasses contained what appeared to be typical plant and insect life.

At first glance the system seemed ideal for colonization, although the reddish hue of everything was slightly unsettling. Unfortunately the tests of the research team shattered that illusion. While the atmosphere on the surface was breathable, just above this was a layer of a slightly alien lithium gas, cataloged as Lithium-R. This

wispy reddish gas would condense in the rainfall. The result was that Lithium-R was infused into everything on HD 157890-2, the water, the soil, the plants, and the insects. While the ecosystem of HD 157890-2 had evolved and adapted to the high level of Lithium-R, it made everything consumable toxic to humans. The water couldn't be purified, and anything grown in the soil, no matter how genetically altered, would eventually cause death in humans. It didn't take long for the planet to be reported as uninhabitable. The research team was withdrawn and the system all but forgotten.

However, Dr. Scion Fri did discover one thing that he neglected to put in his report. In a dense jungle on one of the tropical islands near the equator grew a unique tree he called Redpalm. Redpalm consisted of a long branchless stalk growing up to 50 meters in height, and crowned with large crimson palm leaves. Among the upper leaves grew a fruit much like the pomegranate of earth. Through routine analysis, he discovered the fruit of the tree produced a number of chemicals, including a highly concentrated form of nicotine. When this mixed with the various chemicals present, especially Lithium-R, it was the perfect melting pot for a new drug that required very little refinement. If the interior of the fruit were scooped out, baked at extremely high temperatures, and finely crushed, the snuff created formed a very potent, and highly addictive, euphoric drug. Dr. Fri called his new drug Sciseed.

Sciseed would be extremely addictive but relatively harmless at first. However prolonged use would have severe mentally and physically degenerative effects. In the later stages of use, the users' skin would begin to turn a dull shade of crimson, and a few months later, death would result. Despite this, Dr. Fri's self centered motives found this to be the answers to his dreams. If he could refine and distribute this drug, he would make a fortune and live the life he felt he deserved. While he possessed the chemical background to make Sciseed, he lacked several key elements to make the operation successful.

First, he would need someone knowledgeable in the art of smuggling and dealing illegal drugs. Second he would need equipment to produce and package the drug in quantity. Lastly, and most importantly, he would need manpower to extract the fruit from its remote location.

This seemed like an impossible order to fill, until one year later Dr. Fri came up with a devious solution. A new class 5 colony ship, the Terra Arae, was nearing completion, and would be launching soon for the distant planet Arae 2. Its navigated safe-course would bring it fairly close to the HD 157890 system. The class 5 colony ship contained almost everything Dr. Fri would need to start his operation including a self contained metal heat treating foundry (to provide the specialized ovens for baking the drug), universal factory module (that could be modified for packing), and 2000 colonists (that could be "persuaded" to work as free labor). If the ship could be sabotaged and rerouted to HD 157890 he would have his fortune. The Terra Arae would be just another colony ships "lost" to the hazards of space.

Now that he had a solid plan, Dr. Fri flew to Mars and boldly approached Massimo Grello. Massimo Grello was a small time drug lord and leader of the Cappello Nero, a criminal organization very active in illegal emigration. Massimo Grello had some press a few years back, being suspected of human trafficking but had never been convicted. Massimo had the knowledge and manpower

to run the operation combined with a complete lack of morals. Dr. Fris' offer intrigued Massimo and a pact was formed. The Cappello Nero cosca carried out the sabotage, and reprogramming of the Terra Arae's engines and navigational computers, and the operation went off without a hitch. The Terra Arae disappeared.

10 years later Sciseed is the mysterious drug sweeping the Core Systems. Fri and Massimo live in luxury on Mars off the profits from the drug. On HD 157890-2, Massimo's Cappello Nero cosca monitor the sciseed production base away from the prying eyes of the FLEA. The colonists of the Terra Arae are awakened from cryo-sleep as needed to fill the labor ranks. They are forced the drug till hopelessly addicted, and then used as slave labor to harvest the Sciseeds, and work in the refinery or packaging facility. The colonists are kept under control by force, and their addiction to Sciseed. They are worked ruthlessly until the drug and harsh treatment finally claim their lives.

THE ADVENTURE 1

Players Introduction

Read the following boxed text to your players to start the adventure.

You are floating in the void of space. Above you, the airlock of the Merchant Venturer closes without a sound. Below you is your destination, the derelict class 5 colony ship, the Terra Arae. This ghost from the past had gone missing 15 years ago, another colony ship lost to the hazards of space along with its 2000 hopeful colonists.

2 months ago, Sir David Rupert, a hobby geologist was visiting an uninhabited and remote system simply categorized as HD 157890. While passing the second planet in the system, he was very surprised to come upon the hulk of the colony ship orbiting the planet. He immediately returns to Calamity to recruit a recovery team.

Having heard of your exploits on the Erebus, he immediately called on your services, offering you a lucrative contract that you couldn't refuse. Our 4-person team was immediately dispatched to HD 157890, accompanied by a synthetic to liaise with Sir Rupert. You have suited up and are taking the space walk to the derelict. The fifth member, Andy-4, is taking the caravel down to the planet to do some scans of the surface. Your mission is to find out what happened to the Terra Arae, and why. Sir Rupert expects a full report on your return.

Give the Players a chance to ask questions now. They can ask about the appearance of the Terra Arae from the outside (see "The Terra Arae at a Glance"). They can also ask questions about the HD 157890 system, since you can assume they got a briefing before being sent here. Use an Idea roll, if you like, to see if they retained the knowledge they were given in the briefing. In fact, let them ask any background questions that seem reasonable for the situation.

When the Players are done, proceed to Keepers Information #1. They are entering the Terra Arae through the blown open airlock (Area 1 on the Map of the Terra Arae).

KEEPERS INFORMATION 1

The Class 5 Colony ship

The class 5 colony ship is the smallest and least luxurious colony ship produced. It requires an operating crew of 20 men, while the passengers remain in cryo-sleep in the aft cryo-chamber during the entire trip.

The ship contains the barest essentials to support the skeleton crew, and get the craft to its destination. It has a control bridge, living quarters for the crew, four massive engines, an engineering deck, a cargo equipped with modules and four cryo-chambers. These are all connected by long access tunnels lined with exposed cables, mechanisms, and computer arrays used to check various functions of the ship.

KEEPERS INFORMATION 2

The Terra Arae at a glance

Several things can be noted about the current state Terra Arae from the outside of the craft itself. The most obvious is that it is floating dead. None of the running or interior lights are on. Scans do show, however, that there is still some power flowing through the ship, so some systems must still be functional after all this time.

There is a large hole where the airlock used for EVA was located. This hole is blackened and ragged. It is obviously the result of an explosion or weapon (more on this later, see Area 1 on the Map of the Terra Arae).

Once inside the ship there are no lights (other than in the Cryo-Chamber: Area 7 on the Map of the Terra Arae) or artificial gravity. These functions along with life support cannot be returned as they have been destroyed via the explosion in the engineering room (Areas 5). The floor grate is metal throughout. Below the grate run wires and cables along with various access panels and small maintenance areas.

Idea roll:

The last thing to be noticed is that the Tug is gone, as well as 4 of the 12 modules. The characters cannot tell what modules are missing (since each class 5 contains different modules), but can access this information from the computers on the bridge.

Computer Operation or Data Analysis:

The modules that are missing are the control tower, a metal heat treating plant, a generic factory (now set up for packing), and a living quarters (one quarters houses about 200 people).

The Key Map to the Terra Arae

H: Hull Breach

These areas on the map are where the ships hull has been breached, and is open to space.

0: Docking Airlock

The vessel has a "Tug" which can be accessed through the docking airlock. The Tug (or command module) is a simple orbit to surface craft that is designed for the sole

purpose of hauling the modules from the front cargo bay (one at a time) and colonists down to the surface of the planet being colonized.

The Tug is currently used by the Cappello Nero cosca (see Keepers Information #3).

1: The Blown Airlock

There is a huge burnt hole about 2 meters in diameter where the EVA airlock used to be. Inside the chamber itself the room is also blackened from the explosion. The apparatus hooks where space suits usually hang have been pulled from the wall (from the pressure when the airlock first breached).

If specifically asked (or if a Spot roll is successful) it will be noticed that the blackness has been worn off the floor in several paths leading toward the bow and the stern. The floor has been traveled by many feet AFTER the explosion.

Mechanical repair:

A successful Test will indicate this was caused by an explosion from within.

Demolition:

A successful roll will reveal that the explosion was the result of a series of very carefully and professionally placed explosive charges... not an accident.

2: The Crew's Living Quarters

Each of these 2 crew quarters contain 5 bunk beds (20 bunks in all). The beds are bolted to the floor, and are still tightly made. In the wall behind each bunk is a panel that slides open (manually) to reveal a personal compartment about 1 meter tall, 1½ meter wide, and about ½ meter deep. Inside the compartments are several sealed (in plastic shrink-wrap) jumpsuit uniforms, some entertainment vid-pads (small computers containing hours of video entertainment, and extensive novel data base personalized to the crew members tastes), and a few personal items (photos mostly and a few trinkets but nothing of real value). The items are a bit disarrayed, as the Cappello Nero cosca have searched through them already.

Please note that there is no artificial gravity. The beds are tightly made, and the personal items safely stowed in their compartments. Ruffling through this stuff will send them floating about.

In the Port living quarter, the dried out husks of two of the off duty crew members float about along with the sheets and pillows of the beds they were laying upon when the ship decompressed.

3: The Common Area

This compact common area contains a lounging couch bolted to the floor, a large vidscreen on the wall (cracked and dysfunctional), and a long table lined with 2 benches, all bolted down. There is a fold out cooking stove in the port-side wall, as well as a storage cupboard. All the canned and packaged A & B rations (basically "real" food) are gone (salvaged long ago by the Cappello Nero cosca). The small (catsup packet sized) packets (about 300) containing emergency paste (a yeast protein goop used to sustain crews in space when all the A & B rations are gone) float spinning about the room.

4: The Access tunnels

These access tunnels are used for repairs and monitoring ship functions during flight. Several of the cables running the span of the tunnel are burned from electricity overload, the after effects of the explosion.

In the starboard tunnel, the dried husks of two of the crew float about along with a variety of metallic and plastic tools.



5: Engineering

Both of the engineering decks are burned and scared from the sabotage explosions. There are several dried body parts floating around both decks, as well as tools and mechanical bits. There are also small hull breaches open to space in both areas.

Mechanical repair:

The explosions were caused by sabotage, and very carefully placed and concealed charges.

Demolition:

The explosions were meant to kill the engineers, and incur hull breaches... NOT to disable the engines.

Stardrive Engineering:

The engines are now disabled, but because of some mechanical disassembly AFTER the explosion (they can't be fixed without several expensive parts which are missing (salvaged by the Cappello Nero cosca and stored in the Warehouse on their base on HD 157890-2)).

6: The Bridge

There is a closed door blocking entry to the bridge. Surprisingly there is a magnetic lock on the door that is still functioning. Next to the door is a numbered keypad. The key to the door is 41225. The lock can be disengaged with an Electronics Systems roll.

The bridge contains 4 workstations (two to the bow, one port, and one starboard) and the captains' chair. The large view screen made of steel-glass is still open showing the stars outside. There are 6 bodies here in the same condition as the rest found throughout the ship.

There is obviously power to one of the workstations at the bow, as a red light is flashing on the screen. The computer at the station is security locked, and will require a successful Computer Security roll to gain

access to the files within. Once in the system, a character with computer skills can look up information about the ship by making a Computer Operation roll for each bit of information they would like to access. Below is detailed the most likely information that will be requested.

Last captains log entry?

The last entry was the day before the explosion (15 years ago, when the Terra Arae was 2 weeks out from Arae 2), it simply states, "All is green". The log entries used to be more detailed, but as the 13 week journey went on the entries got briefer, until "All is green" is about all the captain wrote. "All is green" obviously means everything is functional, and nothing interesting is going on.

What Happened?

This is a bunch of technical mumbo jumbo compiled by the computer that a Character with Stardrive Engineering Skill will have to look at to make sense of. If a Stardrive Engineering roll is successful, the character gains the following information. There were 3 explosions that took place at exactly the same time, one at the airlock, and one on each of the engineering decks. The emergency systems of the computer were preprogrammed to seal the cryo-chamber and retain power and pressure there while power to the rest of the ship was cut off (including life support). All other hatches were to remain locked open, and the emergency shields (an electric force field that would seal off the points of hull breach) were to remain down. Later the cryo-chamber began a depressurization process.

How did the ship get here?

1 hour after the explosion, a subsystem program redirected power to the engine thrusters, changing course toward HD 157890-2, a journey which took 4 weeks. Once in orbit, the engines shut down, and only minimum power to the cryo-chamber was maintained. Most of the ships fuel was burned at this point.

What happened to the Tug and the missing Modules?

After being in orbit for two days the security system was manually overridden, and the Tug was disengaged and removed 4 of the 12 modules.

How often is the computer/cryo-chamber accessed?

About once every 4 months the status of the cryo-chamber is monitored from this control station. At this time, a variable amount of pods are removed from the cryo-chamber. The first amount was 200, with another 20-40 pods being removed every 4 months thereafter.

Why wasn't an emergency beacon sent out?

The Emergency beacon was also tampered with. It was changed to a short range beacon maintained on an obscure frequency. The beacon still remains on (the Cappello Nero cosca use this to keep track of where the ship is at any given time so they can plan their trips accordingly).

7: The Cryo-chambers

The doors to the cryo-chambers are security locked. They can be opened in two different ways. First, the lock can be overridden, from the bridge (area 6 on the map), by making a Computer Operation roll. The second way is

to open up the access panel next to the door and make a successful Electronics Systems roll.

The interior of the rooms are continually lit in a dull blue light. The source of the light is through the grating on the floor. There is a computer access terminal to one side of each door that is used to keep logs on all the pods, their occupants, and status at all times.

The rooms are fairly simple, rectangular in shape. Two large pod support engines are set in the middle of the floor with mechanisms whirling behind enclosed steel-glass view panels. The walls are lined with 2,000, one meter in diameter, round holes. Each hole houses a large metallic cylinder the size of a coffin. Below each hole is a small keypad (used to inject or extract the cryo-pods from the orifice), and above the hole are two small lights, a green one (all systems go), and a red one (something wrong).

These holes are used to house the cryo-pods that the colonists "sleep" in during transit. 800 of the holes are filled the rest are empty. Of the pods remaining 700 are children (ages 16 or younger), and 100 are adults (The Cappello Nero cosca have been using only adults. When the adults are gone they will start using the children).

The pods themselves are a metal cylinder about 2 ½ meters in length with a glass observation window (above the face of the colonist). The colonists themselves have several wires and plugs inserted into and taped onto their bodies. Underneath where the colonist lay are all the mechanisms to sustain cryo-sleep, along with a battery that lasts 24 standard Earth hours. When the pod plugs into the chamber wall, it begins drawing power from the main power source, and transfers all data from the pod to the computer terminal by the door.

Once the characters have had a chance to explore the cryo-chamber jump to The Cappello Nero cosca Attack! Detailed in the next section after the map.



8: Front Cargo Bay

The ship carries a dozen self contained modules. The modules are versatile "fold out" constructions designed to make the initial colonization as successful as possible. They contain living quarters, scientific laboratories, and factories that can be modified to perform a number of tasks. The modules cannot be accessed from inside the ship, and they cannot be "entered" without being deployed on the surface. While attached to the ship they are a condensed, almost solid, block.

After the ship reaches its destination and the modules are deployed, the remainder of the ship is usually cannibalized for any useful parts and materials.

THE ADVENTURE 2

The Cappello Nero cosca Attack!

Once the Players have completed searching the cryo-chamber, but before they leave, two things happen in quick succession.

First, they pick up a transmission from Andy-4 (remember, the synthetic of the party who is flying the ship into the planets atmosphere.). Start out with a little casual conversation:

"How's it going up there? Find out anything interesting?"

Let the Player Characters inform him, and inevitably ask him how things are going on his end. Then hit them with this:

"I just broke into the atmosphere, looks pretty bare down here, doubt if I'll find anything... wait, what's this? That's strange. I'm getting a very faint power reading planet side, something small. Wait, there's something else... 3 S.T.A.M.! incomi..."

and the transmission goes dead. S.T.A.M. are Surface To Air Missiles. This is common knowledge to military player character. One is more than enough to take out the Merchant Venturer. Don't tell your players outright, but their ride home has been completely destroyed, and they are stranded on the Terra Arae. Give the players a few moments for this to sink in... and begin to panic.

The second thing to happen is the Player Characters get some visitors in the cryo-chamber. The Cappello Nero cosca just happen to have sent some of their men up to the Terra Arae to acquire 20 fresh new workers from the cryo-chamber. The thugs aren't aware that the PC's are here, and aren't bright enough to notice the door is open (assuming the PC's left it that way). They come wandering brazenly into the cryo-chamber. Unless the PCs have taken some particular precautions both parties are surprised, and initiative takes place as normal. There are 8 Cappello Nero cosca. They will fight until the first 6 are killed, the remaining 2 will then try to turn tail and run back to the Tug (see Keepers Information #3) and escape if they can. If they do get away in the Tug, it spells bad news for the Players, as they really need that Tug to survive.

If the thugs do get away with the Tug, you will have to decide what to do. Either the Cappello Nero cosca will return in greater number (if you feel like giving the PC's a second chance), or they might just realize they destroyed the PC's ship already, and leave them up there to slowly asphyxiate. Perhaps your players will come up with something brilliant. If you get desperate (or don't want to end the game session with your players characters being asphyxiated), you can have the Player Characters find an un-launched escape pod somewhere on the underbelly of the ship.

If for some reason the Cappello Nero cosca are left undisturbed, they will take 20 of the closest cryo-pods (15 men and 5 women), load them into the Tug, then head back down to their base on the planet below.



KEEPERS INFORMATION 3

Tug to the Surface

The Tug that came with the Terra Arae class 5 colony ship is still being used by the Cappello Nero cosca. They use it mainly for the trips to the colony ship when they need to pick up some new workers for the colony.

The ship itself is a short-range shuttle designed only for trips from the surface to just outside the atmosphere. It isn't suited for deep space travel. The engines don't generate enough speed during the launch to make it practical (unless you want to spend a couple years getting to the next planet in a system). The life support system only contains enough oxygen for 24 hours in space (it is automatically replenished when it reenters the atmosphere). There is no waste facility or water recycler. The ship just wasn't designed for it, so no amount of modification can make it space worthy.

The tug is currently moored to the vessel (area 0 on the Map of the Terra Arae). The Tug itself has a 4 man airlock (or 2 men and a single cryo-pod). The airlock is currently open, and can be operated from within the airlock itself. The thugs usually transfer cryotubes from the cargo area to the airlock via the elevator.

There is one pilot aboard the Tug (with the same statistics as the Cappello Nero cosca detailed in the last section) manning the controls. He is casually waiting for his companions to return, and is looking at the airlock. The first character through the airlock into the Tug will get the drop (+4 DEX SR) on the pilot if they have a weapon ready. Once the first character comes through he will be aware that something is wrong, and start shooting.

Once aboard, the Pilot Player Character will realize the capabilities of the Tug. He will also notice that there is a two way radio (on) that is tuned to a secure frequency (the control tower of the Cappello Nero base). There is also a scanner that is picking up two beacons, one from the Terra Arae, and another from something on the surface). The scanner picks up no other man made structures or power sources on the surface.

Blasted out of the Sky!

There is nowhere within the Tugs capabilities that the characters can go, and hope to live, other than the Cappello Nero cosca base. There are basically two ways to do this, the stealthy approach or the direct approach.

Once the Tug breaks the atmosphere, and gets through the hazy red layer of lithium gas, they can get a good telescopic aerial view of the land around the base. The area for 20 kilometers around the base is shown on the Map of HD 157890-2 in Keepers Information #4.

At a glance the jungle around the base is extremely dense, with only three possible landing areas. The first is the base itself (Area G on the Map of HD 157890-2), the second is the clearing to the northwest of the base (Area A), and the third is the swath of jungle broken and burned by the crashing of the Characters own Merchant Venturer (Area B). The areas of the base and the clearing are obvious, the crash site requires a Spot roll on the part of anyone looking at the telescopic images.

Give the Player Characters a few moments to decide what they are doing. If they proceed to the clearing (area A on the Map of HD 157890-2) or crash sight (area B on the Map of HD 157890-2) AND mention they are taking an indirect approach avoiding getting too close to the base, let them land without incident. If they take too long discussing it, approach the base too closely, or actually approach the base itself, the radio crackles to life. The following message comes across:

"Grugan!? We've had some trouble here. Standard procedure alpha two five...please give the code..."

The code is "Gamma five five thirty six".

Since the Player Characters are very unlikely to know the code, or imitate Grugans' (the leader of the Cappello Nero cosca who entered the cryo-chamber) voice very well, there is a good chance that the Cappello Nero cosca from the base will shoot them out of the sky. Play it by ear. This is not meant to kill the player characters, just get them on the ground. Ham it up though, make lots of rolls to hit and for damage behind the screen. Make the pilot of the Tug make a few piloting rolls to make it appear that he has saved them from a death dealing crash. In this case the players crash land at a location determined randomly (roll a D6 and start them at area C1-C6 accordingly on the Map of HD 157890-2). The characters are all shaken after the crash, but uninjured... thanks to the skillful flying of the Pilot.

THE ADVENTURE 3

HD 157890-2 at a Glance

What You See

The first thing to be noticed is that everything has a reddish tint to it. The soil is reddish, the rivers are reddish, the rocks are reddish, and many of the plants are reddish. There are several plants of different colors, but they all have either a reddish hue or streaks or spots of red.

There is no mammal life to be found, but there is plenty of insect life, some of the bugs rather large and gross looking. The planet isn't "crawling" with insects, but, with close examination of the ground or plants, several varieties can be noted. A common sight is a large foot long red centipede like creature crawling around the trunk of a tree.

On the map of the area of the planet we are dealing with, the palm trees represent dense jungle. The going is tough and it takes about an hour to get through each

square. 20 kilometers can be traveled in a day. This takes into account rest and bathroom breaks, time to "set up camp", and sleep.

The Large Dark red areas are large bodies of water, and the dark red lines extending from them are rivers (the width and depth vary from a couple meters to a dozen). This is fresh water and has a deep red tint to it. It has a high lithium concentrate, along with other alien elements, that can not be purified out by any method (including boiling). Even so, a human can drink the water for a few days before it starts to cause lethargy or have any serious side effects. See the section entitled "What you Taste" for more details on consuming the water.

The thick brown lines extending from the Cappello Nero cosca Base (area G on the map) are bumpy and muddy roads leading to the harvest areas where the Red Palms (and the Sciseeds) grow. These areas are harvested in rotation, giving the fruit time to replenish. The areas labeled "E" on the map are the two currently harvested areas.

What You Hear

The jungle is alive with sounds. The most ominous sound is the constant scratching rustling sound that is caused by the plethora of insects scurrying through the dirt and leaves. There are also several mating calls, like the sound of Earth's crickets and frogs, constantly in the air. Every now and then a trumpet like "honk" pierces the air, and everything else goes silent for a moment. This is the roar of a Giant Litho- Beetle, the largest insect on the planet (see area D on the Map of HD 157890-2).

What You Smell

To sum it up in a word... HD 157890-2 STINKS! The ecosystem is made up of plant and insect organisms. The plants are self fertilizing, so they are constantly dropping leaves, fruits and branches to decompose. Several of the insect species live in this layer of rotting plant debris, secreting their own waste and fluids. Combine this with the heat and humidity, and you have a festering layer of foul smelling rot covering most of the jungle.

What You Taste

Everything on HD 157890-2 has a slightly metallic taste to it, even the air. None of this will kill you immediately, but exposure to the Lithium-R through consumption eventually will. The air itself is breathable, since it is mostly oxygen and carbon dioxide. Most of the Lithium-R is in the upper atmosphere, only condensing in the rainfall. If Player Characters choose to eat the local vegetation (or bugs for that matter) or drink the water, it will give them slight feelings of euphoria. However, this is deadly after a prolonged period of continuous consumption. Side effects like lethargy and sickness will become apparent in a few days. Severe illness and incapacitating body pains will result after 2 weeks, and death after about 30 days. These effects can be negated at any time by simply stopping consumption of Lithium-R.

What You Feel

This adventure takes place near the equator of an already hot planet. This combined with the vegetation and precipitation of the jungle make for a very

uncomfortable hot and humid atmosphere. The temperature runs about 38 degrees Celsius. This probably makes the Player Characters uncomfortable and irritable. This also puts them in the very real danger of heat exhaustion, heat stroke, or dehydration.

KEEPERS INFORMATION 4

Key to the Map of HD 157890-2

A: The Clearing

This is the one place, other than the Cappello Nero cosca base, which can be seen from above that isn't dense jungle. There is a strip of land about 4 kilometers long that is almost totally void of any terrain feature other than gravel and a coarse purplish grass. The Terra Arae's Tug can be easily landed here.

B: The Crash Site

It takes a Spot roll to notice this area from the sky. It is a strip of burnt and torn trees about 600 meters long. At the end of the strip is the crashed wreckage of the Player Characters Merchant Venturer that the Cappello Nero shot down in the first part of the adventure. There is enough room caused by the crash to land the Terra Arae's Tug behind the wreck.

Inside the wreck the Player Characters can find the gruesome remains of Andy-4, he is obviously out of service. While most of the ship has been destroyed and is a twisted pile of metal, the Player Characters can manage to recover 2 M25A1 Combat Rifle, that haven't exploded during the crash, from the weapons locker. The can also recover 3 survival packs containing 1 day of ration pills and water each.

The Cappello Nero cosca have sent a detachment to investigate the crash. They arrive shortly after the Player Characters. If the Player Characters took precautions against such a thing (by leaving a guard outside, or some such thing) they are aware of "something coming" through the jungle, can position themselves, and are considered to be on hold. If all the Player Characters are inside the ship searching, the Cappello Nero cosca hear them inside the wreck thumping about. They take a defensive position behind some trees and rocks (medium cover). When the Player Characters emerge they order them to, "throw down any weapons, and put your hands in the air!" The Cappello Nero cosca are considered to be on hold. If the Player Characters surrender, the Cappello Nero cosca tie up their hands, and begin the trek back to the base. There are three Cappello Nero cosca in the detachment.

C1-6: Random Crash Locations

If the Player Characters bring the Tug to close to the enemy base, they probably got Blasted Out of the Sky, as described in Keepers Information #3. In this case roll 1D6 to determine a random location where they crash. The location is one of the C locations on the map, with the 1D6 determining the exact one.

As mentioned before, the Player Characters are shaken from the crash, but unhurt, thanks to the skillful piloting skills of the Tug pilot.

A detachment of Cappello Nero cosca will be sent to investigate the Tug crash. It will take them a while to get there. About 6 hours after the Player Characters leave the site, roll a 1D10. On a result of 1, the Cappello Nero cosca detachment and the Player Characters come across each other while trudging through the Jungle. There are 3 Cappello Nero cosca in the detachment.

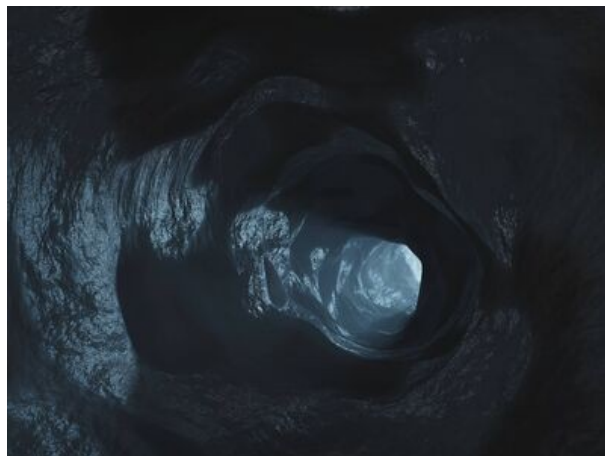
D: Giant Litho-Beetle Tunnels

At these areas the tunnels of the Giant Litho-Beetle, one of HD 157890-2's largest predators, get very close to the surface. Player Characters can make a Listen roll to hear that the earth below there feet makes a hollow echoing sound as they walk.

There is a 1 in 4 chance (rolled on a D4 for each Player Character) that the ground they are walking on will collapse (or a 3 in 4 chance, if they jump up and down or any similar action). Any Character who causes the collapse can make an Agility roll to jump clear, or fall into the tunnel below. Anyone falling through takes 1D6 damage. If the Player Character succeeds a Luck roll, he takes no damage as he, instead, falls into a large pile of the Giant Litho-Beetles mushy droppings. The surface hole created by a character falling through is about 2 meters in Diameter, the earth at the rim is about 20 cm thick.

The tunnel the Player Character falls into is about 3 meters in diameter. It is choppy and round, and covered with a reddish slime (the mucus discharge of the Litho-Beetle). It is even more humid than the surface, and smells like mold. The tunnel heads off in random directions. If a character can get his directional bearings, or has a compass, he can navigate the tunnels. The tunnels are much easier to travel than the surface, and travel time is doubled (40 kilometers per day on the map). With an Orientation roll (and the afore mentioned compass), the tunnels can be traversed to just outside the Cappello Nero cosca Base (area G on the Map of HD 157890-2).

Unfortunately, the ruckus of anyone falling through the surface into the tunnel immediately attracts the attention of the Giant Litho-Beetle that makes these tunnels its home. Fortunately for the Player Characters, these beetles are very territorial, and there is only one to be encountered in each tunnel complex. The beetle attacks anyone entering its tunnel in 1D6 x 10 seconds and fights to the death. Just before the beetle attacks, the victim can make a Spot roll to see its glow, and hear its clicking. If unnoticed the beetle is considered to be on Hold and hits with a +10% for the first round of combat.



E: Sciseed Harvest Location

These two locations are the active Sciseed harvest areas. During the daylight hours three Cappello Nero cosca guards, per location, drive the All Terrain Trucks (Area 8 on the Map of the Cappello Nero cosca Base) out here with 20 colonist slaves (or "Reds", as the Cappello Nero cosca often call to them).

Each slave is tasked with harvesting 20 sciseeds per day, or they get no evening meal. Getting the Sciseeds is no easy task. The tall stalk of the spiny thorned Red Palm tree must be painstakingly scaled 30-50 meters. At the top, a single Sciseed grows. If it is ripe, it can be harvested, if not the Red must move on to the next tree. Due to the difficult climb up and down, this is very time consuming. It doesn't help that the colonists are weak from malnutrition, abuse, and are strung out on Sciseed.

Once the Sciseeds are harvested, they are loaded into the back of the truck. Since the truck bed is full, the colonist slaves must jog behind the truck on the trip back to the base. Along the road, the decomposed or skeletal remains of colonist who didn't make the short journey are not a totally uncommon site. These remains are left as another gruesome reminder that keeps the Reds submissive.

F: Security Security-Bot Patrol Areas

The area around the Cappello Nero cosca Base is patrolled by a Security Robot. When the Player Characters enter a 1 km radius area the Base marked with an G on the map, there is a 1 in 6 chance (a 1 on a D6) the Security-Bot picks them up on its scanners and moves to intercept them.

If the Security-Bot intercepts the Player Characters, it will ask, in a metallic monotone voice, for their Identification code (each Cappello Nero cosca is assigned a 3 digit identification code consisting of a letter and two numbers). If the codes given are good, the Security-Bot allows the Player Characters to pass unhindered, and will continue on its patrol. If the codes are bad, or if none are given at all in 10 seconds (you can have the robot count down the 10 seconds in a loud annoying robot voice if you like) it will attack.

If the Player Characters destroy the Security-Bot, there is a chance they may want to try to fix and reprogram it for some devious use. This is possible with a successful difficult Electronics Systems roll and a successful Computer Program roll. The Security-Bot is an older ERC Warbot model, so it can't perform super complicated tasks. Its main function is patrol and combat. Any task beyond its primary function that can't be described in a few words (such as, "follow us" or "smash through the gate" or "kill that guy... and that guy!") require the Security-Bot to make an Idea roll to perform, or it mutters the typical robotic, "Does not compute!" phrase. It has weapons for "hands" so it can not perform tasks that require manipulation.

G: The Cappello Nero cosca Base

This is the location of the Cappello Nero cosca Base. See the details and map of the Cappello Nero cosca Base After the Map of HD 157890-2.

KEEPERS INFORMATION 5

The Cappello Nero cosca Base at a Glance

Area G on the Map of HD 157890-2 is the location of the Cappello Nero cosca Base. The area about 30 meters around the base is cleared, beyond that it is surrounded by thick jungle. The base itself is in a partial valley, with elevated hills to the North and West (these elevated positions are great for spying on the base or getting its layout). The entire base is built on grey Plasdurocrete slabs. Underneath the base is a large tank for fresh water imported from Mars. Waste is piped out about 30 meters South into a swampy area (the pipe is about 25 centimeters in diameter and made of plastic).

The Colonists

There are currently 80 colonist slaves residing on the base. They are all gaunt, and dressed in dirty rag clothing. They all move about like zombies, with dark rings around their eyes, and spittle dripping from the sides of their mouths. They are all hopelessly addicted to Sciseed, and the promise of their next fix, and the guns of the Cappello Nero cosca, are what keep them under control. As mentioned before, Sciseed addicts' skin starts to turn a ruddy red color late in the addiction, as death draws near. Anyone observing the colonists will see several of them have varying shades of reddening skin. Those with the reddest skin also look to be in the worst for the wear. Despite this outward appearance, the colonists BELIEVE they are happy when they are on a euphoric Sciseed rush. Their life has become a series of shadowed episodes, waiting for the next Sciseed fix.

Each of the colonist slaves is assigned a job in either the refinery, the packaging warehouse, or as a harvester. They are also tasked with other menial jobs as needed. A typical day of a colonist consists of waking at dawn, heading to the "slop line" (a table that is set up outside the north side of Cappello Nero cosca Recreation Building (Area 4), where the colonists are fed a pasty yeast gruel), going to the refinery for the morning fix (a small dose of Sciseed to get the slaves motivated for the day) given just outside the Refinery (Area 6), then heading off to their assigned job under the supervision of the Cappello Nero cosca. When the day is over, they once again go to the slop line, then to the refinery for a full hit of Sciseed, and then they are herded into the Colonist Housing building (Area 3) and locked in for the night.

Player Characters who try to enlist the colonists' aid will find they are far beyond fighting the Cappello Nero cosca in any way. When on a Sciseed rush they are withdrawn. When they aren't high their will is broken and their bodies are weak.

The Cappello Nero cosca

The Cappello Nero cosca are pirates at heart. Most dress unique, but they all have a semi-militant look about them and always carry weapons. Even though they are scoundrels, they are loyal to their organization, and perform their duties with diligence. They are rotated out every six months along with supplies, and are well rewarded for their loyalty and service.

The Cappello Nero cosca are ruthless and treat the colonists as little more than slaves to be used and abused. They refer to the colonists simply as "Reds" (because of the tone of their skin when the Sciseed starts to take them). There is no compassion for the Reds from any of the Cappello Nero cosca stationed on the base.

The Base operations are overseen by Capo Salvatore Gratz and his right hand man "Brains" Magree. Underneath them are the supervisors of the various work details (harvest, refinery, and warehousing). The Cappello Nero cosca respect and fear Capo Gratz. Disobedience is dealt with quickly (and is often deadly). The rule of the base is that no Cappello Nero cosca is to ever try Sciseed. Breaking this rule results in death by crucifixion... which has managed to keep most of the men in line.

The sighting (and subsequent shooting down) of the Player Characters Merchant Venturer above the base has the Cappello Nero cosca on a higher state of alert than they have been in some time.

There are 35 thugs total assigned to the base at this time. Exact locations of all the thugs at a given time may vary from those given on the map key, depending on time of day and special situations. Game Masters will have to use common sense to manage this.



Observing The Base

If the Player Characters take some time to watch the base, they will see the general hustle and bustle of a days operation. This has already been detailed in the typical day of a colonist in The Colonists passage.

Other things they will notice is that after the morning meal, the two trucks (Area 8), driven by Cappello Nero cosca guards, load up with colonists and head out to the harvest sites (areas E on the Map of HD 157890-2) along the well worn dirt roads.

Another notable action is that of crates being loaded into the Ship (Area 10) from the warehouse (Area 7). It can also be noted that the guards patrolling the outskirts of the base (Area F on the Map of HD 157890-2) and those stationed in the guard tower (Area 2) are changed every 4 hours. On occasion a group of Reds will be sent out with barrels (they tote them on their backs) of waste to dump in a pit about 1 kilometer from the base.

KEEPERS INFORMATION 6

Key to the Map of the Cappello Nero cosca Base

1: Mass Grave of the Colonists

There are several large mounds in this area with various stages of plant re-growth on them. The furthest trench is still open and contains several decomposing bodies of colonist slaves. The bodies are crawling with a generous assortment of the native insect life. As they die from the "red death" caused by prolonged use of Sciseed, or just from exhaustion or illness, they are thrown here by the Cappello Nero cosca. The bodies are periodically covered with dirt.

On the western edge of the first trench are two crucifixes (marked with an X on the map) holding the skeletal remains of Cappello Nero cosca that got caught using Sciseed... and paid the price. They are left here as a reminder to the rest to stay clear of the drug and follow the rules.

2: Guards Tower / Electric Fence

The entire complex is surrounded by a 3 meters tall electric fence topped with barbed wire. The power to the fence is regulated by the Power Generator inside the base (area 9 on the map). Anyone touching the fence is instantly Shaken. Touching the fence for a prolonged time causes progressively more damage. Anyone attempting to scale the fence while the charge is on would take 1D6 damage the first round, 2D6 the second, and 3D6 the third (it takes 3 rounds to scale the fence). In addition, another 1D6 damage is taken at the top from the barbed wire. Anyone attempting to scale the fence must also make a Fortitude roll AND an Agility roll or get caught up in the barbed wire above, taking another 1D6 damage, and being immobilized.

The two guard towers (a ladder leading up to a metal nest containing a chair and an umbrella) are manned by one Cappello Nero cosca. These thugs are armed with Automatic Combat Rifles (ACR). These guards keep an eye out along the perimeter of the base and open and close the gate (non-electrified) with a remote control located in the tower nest.

3: Reds (Colonist) Housing

This is one of the housing modules brought down from the Terra Arae. This is where the colonists are contained when not working. The interior is made up of several small apartments with common areas on each floor. The rooms contain the bare necessities with personal belongings being nonexistent. The building interior is lit with dim florescent lighting, burnt out in several locations. Water is rationed out to the extreme, and as a result the colonists never bathe. The entire place is dingy and smells like urine.

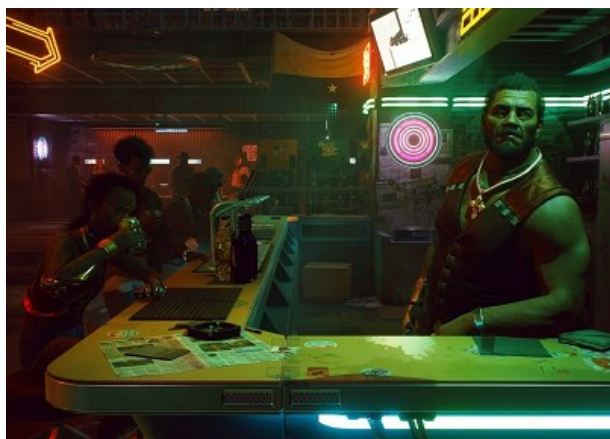
When the colonists are here they are usually asleep and/or high on Sciseed. They spend very little time interacting with each other in any but the most basic ways. The Sciseed has stripped them of their personalities and motivation.

4: Cappello Nero cosca Recreation Building

This building is where the Cappello Nero cosca come to rest and have a good time after a “hard” day of working the Reds. There is a room full of electronic games, billiards, and tables for playing cards. This is also the location of a mess hall (for the Cappello Nero cosca only, the Reds are served outside) and a Bar. A fat old Cappello Nero cosca, Augusti, who does the cooking and operates the Bar is here at all times.

There are three sexual slaves from the colonists who help maintain the building and service the Cappello Nero cosca. The sexual slaves rotate every 6 months. They never leave the building.

There are 2D6 Cappello Nero cosca here at any given time. There is a 50% chance that any of the thugs here are inebriated (-20% to all skill rolls).



5: Cappello Nero cosca Barracks

This building contains the personal quarters of the Cappello Nero cosca. Inside there is a long hall lined with doors leading into individual rooms. Each room is designed to house 4 men, containing cots, footlockers, a desk, and some personal items. It is doubtful the Player Characters will have the luxury of searching through the rooms thoroughly. If they do, common items are clothes, magazines and books, computers, 3D Vid-Platforms (basically 3 dimensional television that shows recorded movies.), and weapons and ammunition. There are few Credits to be found, as most of the Cappello Nero cosca pay is wired directly into their accounts on Mars.

At any given time there are 2D6 Cappello Nero cosca here. Half of that amount will be asleep, and take 1D4 combat rounds to wake up if they are disturbed.

6: Heat Treating Plant / Sciseed Refinery

This is another module that was brought down from the Terra Arae. It was originally designed to be a heat treating plant (heating metals to extremely high temperatures to make them harder) to help build and sustain the colony. The ovens are now used (at a fraction of their maximum temperature) to bake the raw Sciseed into its refined snuff.

This large building is divided into three large rooms. The room in the front is where the Sciseed from the harvest is unloaded. Here they are tested for chemical balance by 10 trained colonist slaves supervised by 2 Cappello Nero cosca lab controllers. The seeds are scooped from their husk, and transported to the next room.

The middle room contains the large oven used to cook the Sciseed. The room is extremely hot to the point of being uncomfortable. The oven is about 4 meters wide, 4 meters high, and 6 meters deep, with 30 centimeters thick insulation lining the interior walls and a computer station used to monitor any changes in temperature during the long baking process. There are 5 colonist slaves here supervised by one Cappello Nero cosca.

The back room is the most disturbing. Inside are 20 medical tables. Strapped to 10 of these tables are some of the more recent colonists brought back from the Terra Arae. They are being intravenously fed doses of Sciseed at regular intervals. All new colonist slaves are brought here for one month for “treatment” to get them hopelessly hooked on the drug, and break any will they may have left. There is 1 Cappello Nero cosca here (Dr. Frederick Brack). He has kept extensive records of the effects of the drug on his laboratory rats. While this is inhumane, the records would be of great value to the medical scientists of the FWA. Dr. Brack is a coward with a bald head and thick glasses, he carries no weapons and will cower rather than fight.

If the Game Master chooses, or the Player Characters are getting beaten badly, you may have some of the colonists in the back room still in a condition to fight. Consider them to be 7+1D6 in all characteristics, with a 35% in the Fighting and Shooting skills. They have no equipment or special abilities, and are treated as extras.

7: Sciseed Packaging and Warehouse

When the Sciseed is done baking at the refinery, colonist slaves are sent to carefully transport it to the warehouse. In the warehouse it is painstakingly measured into one hit baggies and shrink wrapped. These are then assembled into 100 hit plastic containers, which are then boxed in airtight cargo shipping crates. These crates are stored in the warehouse and periodically loaded into Gav Blewers Blockade Runner (Area 10 on the map). There are currently 30 crates in the warehouse, each with electronic locks (The lock codes are filed in the computer at the control tower – Area 11).

The back of the warehouse is also used to store equipment, supplies, and junk. Among this stuff is a mechanics workbench, and to one side all the parts of the engine of the Terra Arae that were removed to make it dysfunctional.

There are 10 colonist slaves working here during the day, supervised by 2 Cappello Nero cosca.

8: All Terrain Trucks

There is very little to go outside the base for. These trucks are used almost exclusively for harvesting Sciseed. They are camouflage green, which sticks out conspicuously among the reddish foliage of HD 157890-2. They are 2 ton capacity all terrain trucks that ride on heavy duty wheels. The shocks are blown, making for a bumpy ride along the Jungle roads. During the day they are at the harvest locations (Area E), during the evening they are parked in front of the Refinery (Area 6 on the map).

9: Power Generator

This incredibly expensive power generator supplies an almost unlimited flow of energy to the base. It is lined with switches and levers that control the flow of energy

to everything, including the pumps to an underground water tank. It takes a skilled mechanic to make heads or tails of the machine (difficult Mechanical Repair roll for each bit of information desired). The machine runs with a humming noise that, while not terribly loud, is a bit irritating.

10: Gav Blewers Blockade Runner

Parked on an upraised landing platform is a sleek Martian ship, Gav Blewers Blockade Runner. This is one of two ships tasked with bringing supplies from Mars to the base and returning with a fresh cargo of Sciseed. The round trip takes about 15 weeks, including a 10 days layover at each location. The ship is scheduled to leave in 5 days from when the Player Characters arrive at the base. The huge cargo hold is currently being filled with crates of Sciseed, and is about half full.

The ship's pilot is a Cappello Nero smuggler named Gav Blewer. He doesn't socialize much with the other members of the family, eating and sleeping on the ship. However, 2 or 3 times during the stopover, he will have fun with the sex slaves. Gav is a tall landlubber with a Martian accent who wears UV-blocking goggles at all times to protect his sensitive eyes. He's a loner who prefers space to land. He'll fight to the death to protect his ship. But he's not suicidal, and if it saves his skin, he's willing to make a deal for amnesty and maybe a few credits.



11: Tower Control / STAM Launcher

This building is the Control Tower, another of the modules brought down from the Terra Arae. This is where Capo Gratz and his right hand man "Brains" Magree reside. From here they run and maintain control of the base. This is also the main weapons locker, and a supply of weapons, ammunition, and explosives can be found locked in the basement. Next to the basement door is a numbered keypad. The key to the door is 2666. The lock can be disengaged with an Electronics Systems roll.

On top of the building is the S.T.A.M. Launcher (Surface To Air Missile Launcher). It was put here as a defense in case anyone discovers the base. The Player Characters Merchant Venturer is the first ship they ever had to use it on. The Missiles it shoots are heat seekers specially designed to lock onto the heat signatures of atmospheric spacecraft or aircraft. The shooter makes his Shooting roll before the missile is actually launched to lock onto the target (If the Shooting roll fails, the missile isn't launched). Once the missile is away it hits automatically.

(S.T.A.M. Missile Launcher, 100km range, 12D6 Damage, ROF 1, PV +12, Heavy Weapon.)

Capo Gratz takes care of the overall running of the base and its personnel. Brains is in control of all the data, paperwork, payroll, and inventory. The Control Tower has an extensive computer database and gives access to records of all the Cappello Nero cosca illegal activities along with names of bigwigs (including Dr. Scion Fri, and Massimo Grello). All this information can be accessed with a combination of a successful Computer Operation roll AND a difficult Data Analysis roll (this can be done by one character, or a combination of rolls by 2 characters.).

If the base is openly under attack, Capo Gratz will run outside to see what is going on. If it becomes obvious the Cappello Nero cosca are going to loose (or have already lost), Brains will be trying to destroy data when the Player Characters enter the Control Tower. If the Players have been stealthy, Capo Gratz will be her along with Brains. Gratz will fight to the death. Brains will hide under the desk, and refuse to fight. If threatened, he will offer up the information in the computer in exchange for his life and a deal for amnesty.

KEEPERS INFORMATION 7

Wrapping It Up

This adventure has been designed to be "open ended". This means that the players are thrown into a situation and location with a problem to solve, and left to solve it in any way they come up with. By the end of the adventure, four basic problems need to be solved.

First, the Player Characters must discover what happened to the Terra Arae by piecing together the evidence. Second, they need to find a way to return to the Calamity to report this information. Third, they may need to rescue the colonist planet side and aboard the Terra Arae. Fourth, they may need to stop the Cappello Nero cosca in their criminal activity, and make sure they can't do it here again.

The first goal, discovering what happened to the Terra Arae, should be easy enough to accomplish by evidence and simple deduction. This is probably the easiest problem to solve. The second problem to be solved is finding a way to get back home. The answer is in the form of the Gav Blewers space ship. The answer is simple, how to accomplish the task may prove more challenging.

The final two tasks, rescuing the colonist, and handling the Cappello Nero cosca, are a bit more difficult. Your players are bound to come up with creative ways to do this, so be ready to run with them and improvise.

However, I've provided some additional information on the most "obvious" paths the Players might take, and some answers to questions that may arise.

The obvious way to accomplish both missions is to destroy the base and kill (or take prisoner) all the Cappello Nero cosca. The Player Characters should be able to handle the Cappello Nero cosca if they dispatch them in small groups, using a bit of stealth and planning. The base itself can be nicely destroyed with the S.T.A.M. launcher and/or the explosives stored in the Control Tower. Possibly the easiest way to destroy the base (and a nice chunk of the landscape) is to launch a Gut Buster

Torpedo from Gav Blewers Blockade Runner as the Player Characters leave atmosphere.

For a more permanent solution, the Player Characters should be able to get all the data on those responsible for this crime at the Control Tower. This can be reported to the FWA, who can send regular patrols to HD 157890-2 in the future to make sure the Sciseed crops are destroyed, and no other pirates attempt to start the operation again.

As far as rescuing the colonists, all of those out of cry sleep should be able to fit (somewhat crowded) in the cargo hold of the Gav Blewers ship. Enough rations for the one month trip back to the closest FWA planet can be found in the mess at the Recreation Center. Unfortunately, the Player Characters will have to bring along some Sciseed and ration it to the colonists on the trip home or there will be some horrible withdrawal problems aboard the ship. Once on a FWA controlled planet, the colonists can be put in the care of physicians who can start the rehabilitation process.

The Colonists aboard the Terra Arae can be rescued in three obvious ways. First, by repairing the engines with the parts found in the warehouse and programming the ship to fly to a FWA controlled planet. The second way is to physically tow the ship with a tractor beam from Gav Blewers ship. The third (and potentially disastrous) is to leave it there with the plans of having the FWA sending someone else to retrieve it later.

Of course, there is the very real chance the players will do none of this. They may infiltrate the Cappello Nero cosca base, hijack the Blockade Runner, and hightail it to the stars. In this case, the Cappello Nero cosca next supply ship arrives in one month to find the operation comprised. They pack up shop, destroy the base (along with any evidence to implicate them), kill all the colonists, and haul the Terra Arae to another location in the hopes of starting the operation again at another time.

If the Player Characters kill off all the Cappello Nero cosca, but leave the colonists behind unsupervised, they will all overdose on Sciseed long before the FWA can rescue them. When the Cappello Nero cosca supply ship arrives, they will assume the Colonists revolted, killed all the thugs, and then overdosed. They will start up the operation again, with new slaves from the Terra Arae (providing it is still in orbit).



KEEPERS INFORMATION 7

Loose Ends

The adventure itself concludes when the Player Characters are safely aboard Gav Blewers Blockade Runner and headed to Calamity to report what they have learned.

After the Player Characters rescue the Colonists and stop the operation on HD 157890-2, a message is sent to the FLEA on Mars. A sting operation to bring Dr. Scion Fri and Massimo Grello to justice is initiated.

Unfortunately, the two villains give the FLEA the slip. It turns out that they've taken refuge in the BG-386 orbital station, which orbits the planet of the same name in the Alpha Ophiuchi system, far out in the rim. BG-386 is an independent colony owned by a disreputable "retired" crime lord, and a very dangerous place. The FLEA has no jurisdiction there.

While brooding over this, the Player Characters are approached by a group of relatives of the colonists murdered on HD 157890-2. They have pooled their credits, and want to pay the Player Characters to infiltrate BG-386, and bring Fri and Grello back... dead or alive.

Will the Player Characters risk everything, to help settle the score? Why is the crime lord on BG-386 protecting Dr. Fri and Grello? Why is everything outside the BG-386 Starport off limits to visitors?

THE END.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This adventure was indirectly inspired by the Daedalus series of books by Brian M. Stableford. That series really got me thinking about different ways that planets can actually be "alien". It also made me start thinking of the possible procedures and hazards of colonization.

Another major source of inspiration and ideas was Steve Bartells campaign The Forgotten. I was really taken with some of his ideas and hopefully warped and twisted them to new heights. This adventure is published with his blessings.

APPENDIX A: NPC CHARACTERISTICS

Statistical profiles are gathered here to enable the Keeper to copy or print out these pages separately from the campaign to provide a handy reference when running this chapter.

CAPO SALVATORE GRATZ

Pudgy, merciless capo, aged 42.

STR: 15 Move: 3
CON: 14 HP: 28
SIZ: 14 Dex SR: 3
INT: 12 DB: +1d4
POW: 15
DEX: 14
APP: 08
BRA: 13

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	40	+0	1d3+db
Knife	1	45	+0	1d3+2+db
IMI-V pistol	3	40	+0	1d10+1d6*
ACR rifle	3/5/10	50	+0	2d8+2**

*2 clips (20 rds)

**2 clips (60 rds)

Armour:

Personal Body Armor (4AP).

Augmentations:

Wired Reflexes (Cyber), Gyroscopic Stabilizers (Cyber).

Skills:

Dodge: 40%, Listen: 45%, Drive: 50%, Intimidation: 60%, Streetwise: 65%, Hide 45%, Spot: 45%, Zero-G: 35%, Starship Gunnery: 20%.

Appearance:

Salvatore Gratz is a middle aged obese short man. He has an Italian accent, and sports a red goatee. He wears a stylized military outfit, even though he is part of no official military organization. Despite his almost comical appearance, he is a formidable fighter and competent leader.

CAPPELLO NERO COSCA (X35)

Thugs of the Capello Nero.

The thugs are all loyal in their crime syndicate. They will put up quite a fight if faced with intruders, though are not suicidal.

STR: 14 Move: 3
CON: 14 HP: 27
SIZ: 13 Dex SR: 3
INT: 10 DB: +1d4
POW: 09
DEX: 14
APP: 10
BRA: 12

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	30	+0	1d3+db
Knife	1	35	+0	1d3+2+db
VP78 pistol or...	3/10	40	+0	1d10+1d6*
... ACR rifle	3/5/10	40	+0	2d8+2**

*2 clips (36 rds)

**2 clips (60 rds)

Armour:

Personal Body Armor (4AP).

Skills:

Dodge: 35%, Listen: 35%, Drive: 30%, Intimidation: 35%, Hide 25%, Spot: 40%, Zero-G: 35%.

ALAN "BRAINS" MAGREE

The capo's right-hand man, aged 47.

STR: 10 Move: 3
CON: 13 HP: 22
SIZ: 12 Dex SR: 3
INT: 14 DB: +0
POW: 09
DEX: 13
APP: 11
BRA: 08

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	20	+0	1d3+db

Armour:

None.

Augmentations:

NeuralCom SyncLink (Cyber), Math SPU (Cyber).

Skills:

Law: 35%, Accounting 20%, Computer Operation 55%, Data Analysis 20%, Administration 25%, Listen: 35%, Hide: 40%, Zero-G: 15%, First Aid: 20%.

DR. FREDERICH BRACK

The doctor of death, aged 38.

STR: 09 Move: 3
CON: 14 HP: 25
SIZ: 11 Dex SR: 3
INT: 15 DB: +0
POW: 11
DEX: 14
APP: 10
BRA: 06

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	20	+0	1d3+db

Armour:

None.

Augmentations:

Skillsoft Chemistry/3 (Cyber).

Skills:

Medicine 50%, Biochemistry 65%, Biology 40%, Computer Operation 35%, Data Analysis 40%, Administration 20%, Hide: 20%, First Aid: 60%.

GAV BLEWER

Smuggler of the Capello Nero, aged 37.

STR: 12 Move: 3
CON: 13 HP: 29
SIZ: 16 Dex SR: 3
INT: 16 DB: +1d4
POW: 13
DEX: 14
APP: 10
BRA: 11

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Punch	1	30	+0	1d3+db
VP78 pistol	3/10	40	+0	1d10+1d6*

*1 clips (18 rds)

Armour:

Tactical Aerospace Combat Suit (2AP).

Augmentations:

Memory Matrix Enhancer (Cyber), Pressure Sheathing (Cyber).

Skills:

Astrogation: 35%, Astronomy 20%, Computer Operation 55%, Data Analysis 20%, Electronics Comm. 25%, Listen: 35%, EVA: 40%, Zero-G: 35%, Stardrive Engineering 30%, Starship Gunnery: 20%.

GIANT LITHO-BEETLE

Tunnel predator

The Giant Litho-Beetle is a large predatorily beetle native to HD 157890-2. It is a meat eater, and consumes other insects of all sizes. Its preferred meal is that of a large acid spider... but they aren't really very particular. The Litho-Beetle is about 2 meters long, and stands almost as tall. It is covered with a large spiked carapace, and has 2 long arms that end in sharp pincers. It is colored a deep maroon, and when it gets angry it has a dull internal glow and makes a rapid clicking noise with its mandibles.

STR: 3d6+10 21 Move: 6
CON: 2d6+6 13 HP: 34
SIZ: 3d6+10 21 Dex SR: 3
INT: 05 DB: +2d6
POW: 2d6 07
DEX: 3d6 11
APP: n/a HF: 0/1d3

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
Pincer	2	40	+0	1d6+db
Spit acid	1	25	+0	2d6

Armour:

Chitin (4AP).

Note:

Dazzle (due to its infravision the beetle can be dazzled by flashing lights or other heat sources. If it's attackers are using flashlights, torches, or other light source while attacking it suffers a -20% to all attack rolls).

SECURITY-BOT

Recycled Warbot

This Security-Bot is an ERC older discontinued model. It has been replaced by more versatile and "intelligent" models. It appears a metallic crab with a glowing red eye. It has two "arms" protruding from its sides that end in two StA-52 Assault Rifles. It constantly rotates the upper level of its body as it pans back and forth searching for intruders.



STR 18 Move 6
SIZ 16 HP 44
EDU 04
DEX 11
STU 28 AP 7

ATTACKS:	ROF	A%	PV	DAM
StA-52 (x2)	3/5/10	50	+4	2d8+1*

*300 rds each

Skills:

Alertness 80%, Track 70%.

Sensors:

Amplified Hearing, Night Vision.

Enc: 380 kg.

APPENDIX B: HANDOUTS

INVESTIGATORS HANDOUT 1

HD 157890 star system:



Main Star	HD 157890
Type	F5 V
Age	3.4 billion years
Distance from Sol	55.93 light years

Description:

HD 157890 is a star located in the western constellation Ara.

HD 157890 possesses 3 Satellites:

Orbit	Diameter (km)	Orbit (au)	Type	Gravity	Atmosphere	Orbital period	Temp (°C)
I	11980	0.95	Rock	0.92	Carbon dioxide	276.1 days	80
II	14271	1.20	Terran	0.97	Nitrogen/Oxygen	392.0 days	27
III	28022	6.31	Glacier	2.11	Vacuum	12.92 years	-72

INVESTIGATORS HANDOUT 2

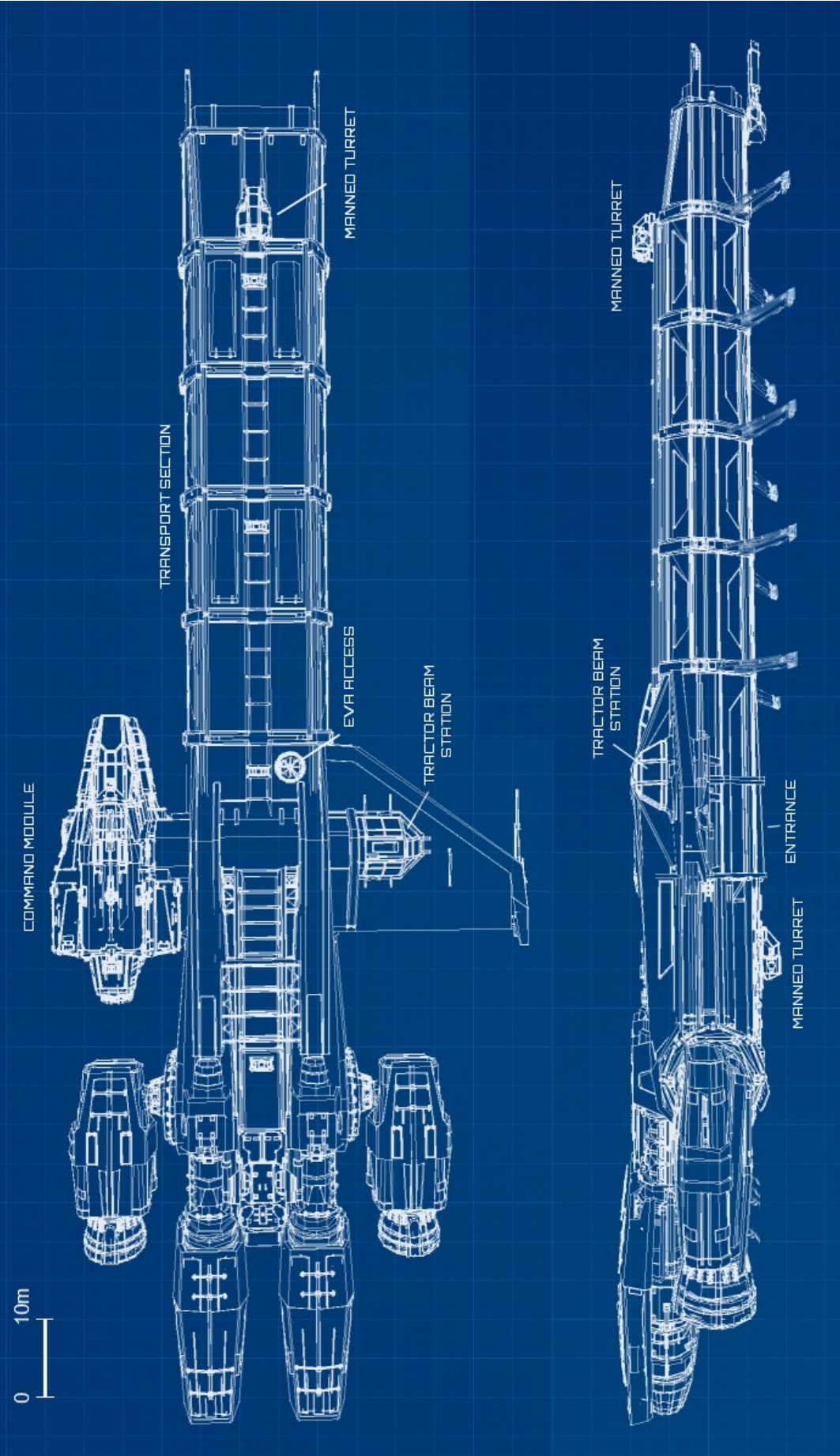
Lithium-R:

Lithium can calm certain psychotic patients and is used as a reference treatment for bipolar disorders. Lithium is also used as an antidepressant or with certain antidepressants, such as fluoxetine, to treat obsessive-compulsive disorder and certain other mood disorders, including suicidal tendencies.

Lithium is therapeutically effective only within a narrow dose range. Intracellular lithium is then most elevated in brain and kidney cells, rapidly becoming a source of acute toxicity for these cells, resulting in necrosis and kidney dysfunction.

This leads to persistent cerebellar lesions and, in particular, tremors. At high doses, the patient becomes ataxic, hypertonic and confused, often with a coarse tremor. Beyond that, convulsions, coma and irreversible brain damage can lead to death.

TERRA ARAE TRANSPORT COLONY STARSHIP



The floor plan is divided into two main sections: DECK 2 (top) and DECK 1 (bottom). A scale bar at the top left indicates a length of 8 meters. A north arrow is located at the top center, pointing towards the top of the page.

DECK 2:

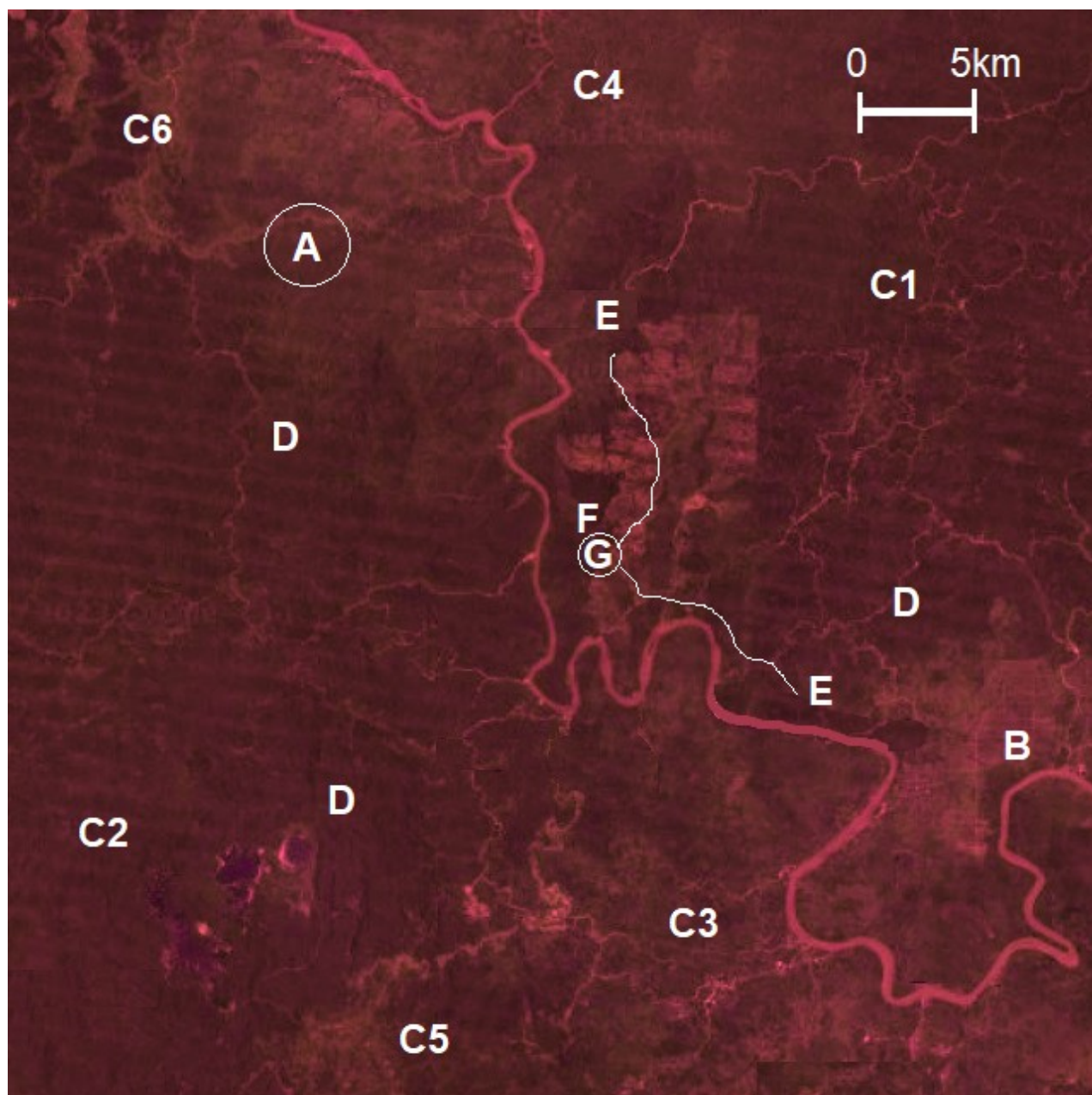
- Bridge:** Located at the top left, containing the PILOTS SEAT and CO-PILOTS SEAT.
- Server Room:** Adjacent to the Bridge.
- Power Plant:** Located below the Server Room, marked with a red 'H'.
- Cargo Elevator:** Located between the Server Room and the Power Plant.
- EVA Access:** Located on the right side of the deck.
- Tractor Beam Station:** Located on the right side of the deck.
- Access Points:** Marked with red numbers 0, 1, 4, and 6.
- Stairways:** Labeled 'CATWALK', 'LADDER DOWN', and 'LADDER UP'.
- Turret Access:** Located at the bottom right.

DECK 1:

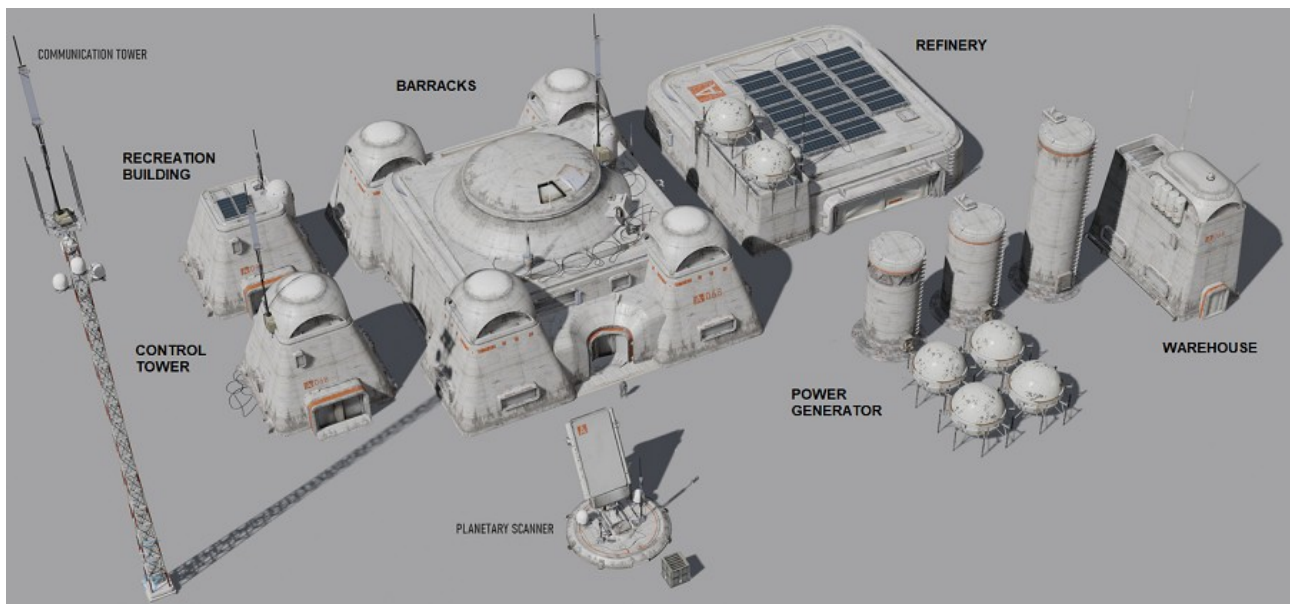
- Shower:** Located at the top left.
- Ladder Up:** Located below the Shower.
- Foyer:** Located in the center.
- Habitation:** Located to the right of the Foyer.
- Engineering Console:** Located at the bottom left, marked with a red 'H'.
- Engine Room:** Located below the Engineering Console, marked with a red 'H'.
- Access Points:** Marked with red numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8.
- Stairways:** Labeled 'LADDER UP', 'LADDER DOWN', and 'SIDE-ACCESS ELEVATORS'.
- Cargo Modules:** Located on the right side of the deck.
- Front Cargo Bay:** Located at the bottom right.
- Turret Access:** Located at the bottom right.



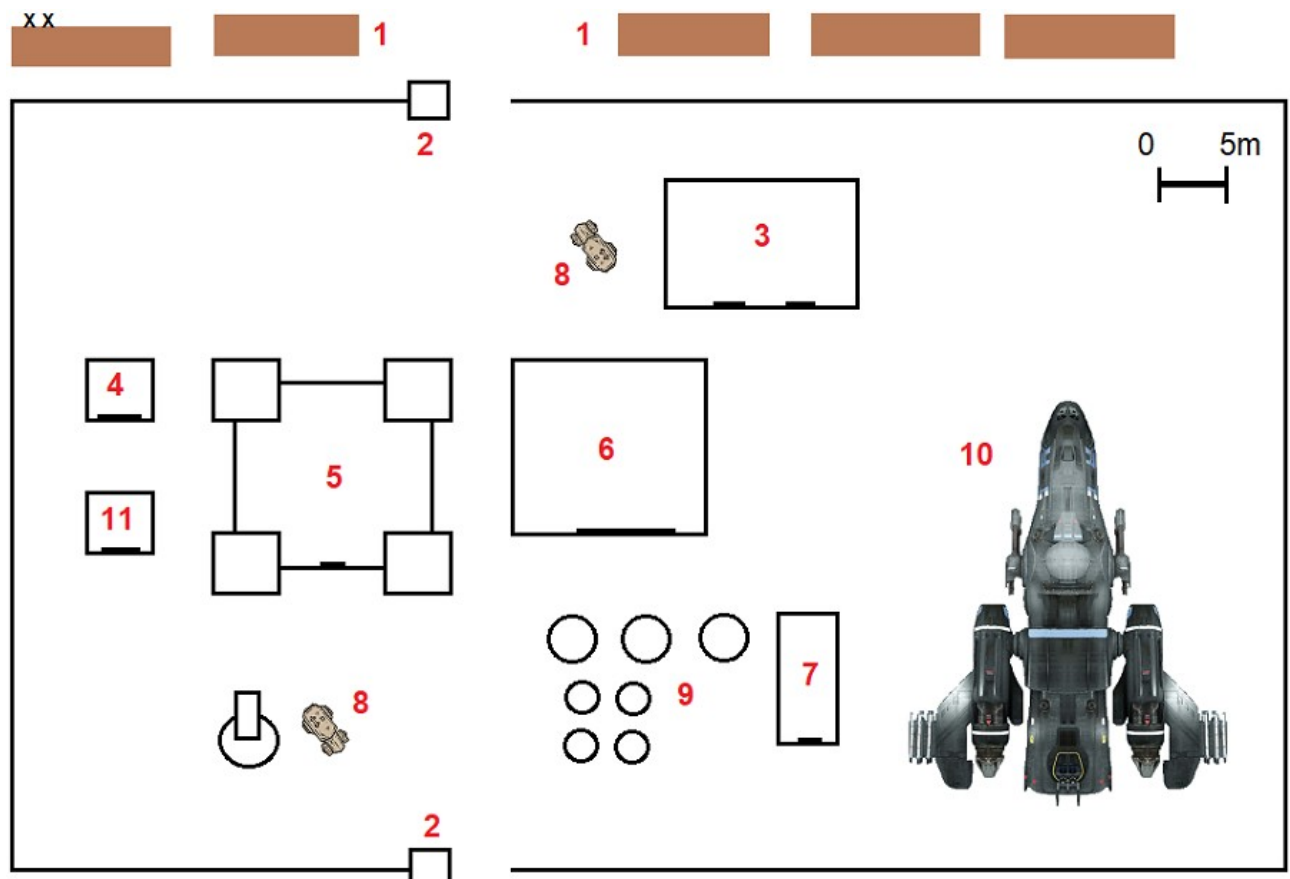
MAP OF HD 157890-2



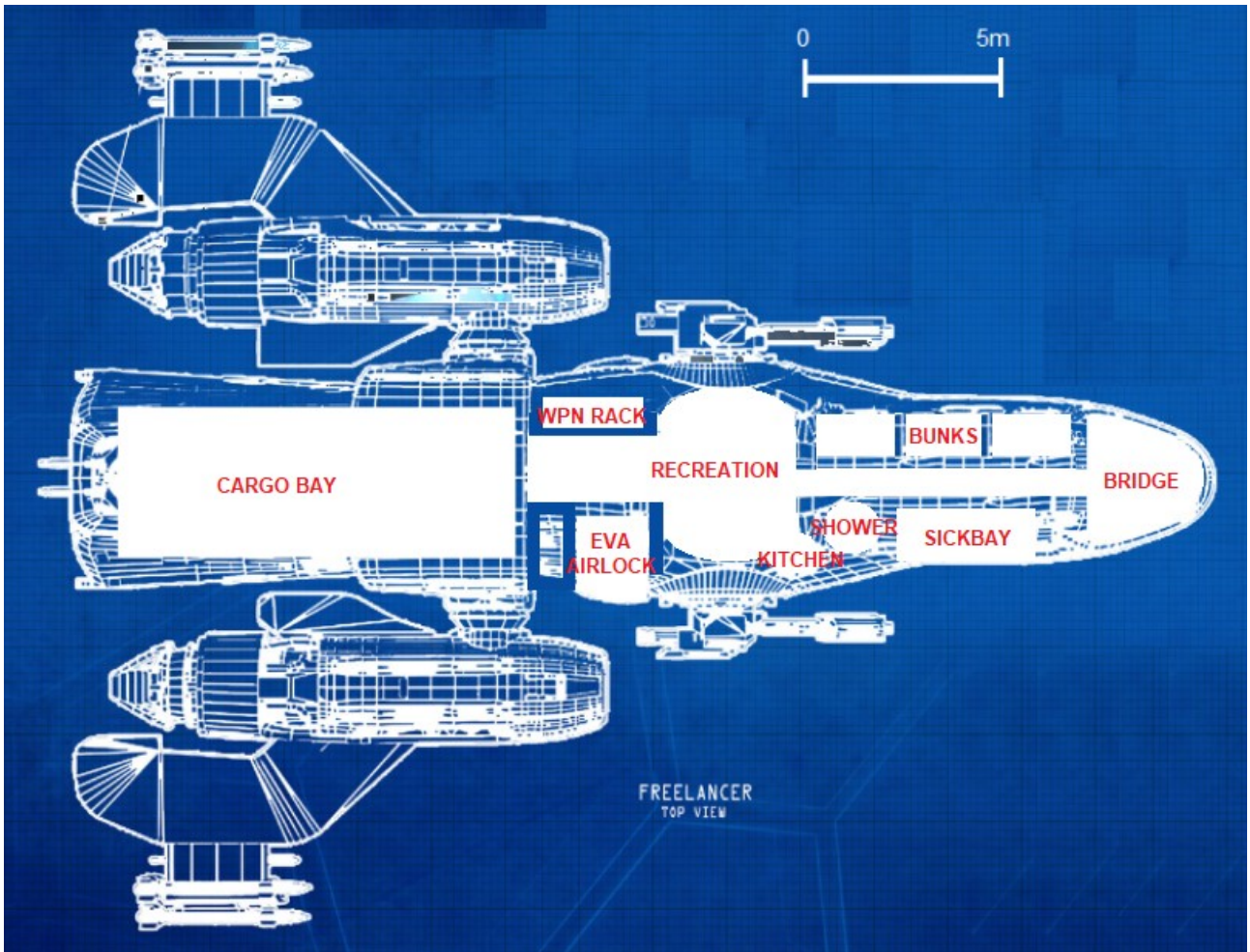
THE CAPPELLO NERO COSCA BASE



MAP OF THE CAPPELLO NERO COSCA BASE



THE BLOCKADE RUNNER



Collaborative Open Source Horror Roleplaying In the 23rd century



NEW HORIZON

Questions and comments on our web-based Git-repository manager

<https://gitlab.com/NHcthulhu/NewHorizon>

always contains the latest release

NEW HORIZON 5.6

NAME _____		Characteristics & Rolls		Hit Points																									
Race _____ Gender _____		STR _____ Effort roll _____ %	Major Wound _____																										
Birthplace _____ Grav. field _____		CON _____ Stamina roll _____ %	DEAD (— _____)																										
Age _____ Height _____ Weight _____		SIZ _____ Damage Bonus _____	0 01 02 03 04 05																										
Profession _____ Wealth _____		INT _____ Idea roll _____ %	06 07 08 09 10 11																										
Employee _____ Rank _____		POW _____ Intuition roll _____ %	12 13 14 15 16 17																										
INSANITIES Temp. Insane _____ Indef. Insane _____		DEX _____ Agility roll _____ %	18 19 20 21 22 23																										
CORRUPTION _____ % Traits _____		APP _____ Charisma roll _____ %	24 25 26 27 28 29																										
PLAYER _____		BRA _____ Fortitude roll _____ %	30 31 32 33 34 35																										
		MOV _____	36 37 38 39 40 41																										
Skills																													
Combat bonus (____) _____		Mental bonus (____) _____	Perception bonus (____) _____																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Airborne Assault (01%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Administration (10%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Alertness (10%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Brawl (25%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Appraise (15%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Alien Environments (01%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Garrote (15%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Anthropology (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Insight – psychology (05%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Gunnery (05%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen (25%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Heavy Weapon _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Astrogation (00%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Orientation (10%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Martial Arts (01%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Astronomy (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Lips (01%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Powered Armour (00%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Biochemistry (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Recon (10%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Street Combat (05%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Biology (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Research (25%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Zero G Combat (00%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Spot (25%) _____ %																										
Communication bonus (____) _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Computer Operation (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Survival (05%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Bargain (05%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Computer Program. (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Track (10%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Bribery (05%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Computer Security (05%) _____ %	Physical bonus (____) _____																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Command (05%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Data Analysis (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Climb (40%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Disguise (01%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Field Fortifications (10%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Combat Helicopter Pilot (00%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> FastTalk (05%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid (30%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Combat Driver (01%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Intimidation (10%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Forbidden Science (00%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Combat Pilot (Atm.) (00%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Persuade (05%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Geology (01%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Contragravity Harness (00%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Seduction (10%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Hyper-Dim. Physics (00%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Dodge (DEX x2) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Status (15%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Law (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Drive (_____) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Torture (15%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> EVA (05%) _____ %																										
Manipulation bonus (____) _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Occult (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Freerunning (05%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Armoury (01%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Other Language (01%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Hide (10%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Combat Engineering (00%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Planetary Engineering (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Jump (25%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Conceal (15%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Physics (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Jump Belt (00%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition (01%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Psychotherapy (01%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Low/Zero Gravity Ops (10%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Electronics Comm. (05%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Stardrive Engineering (00%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Marine Craft (10%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Electronics ECM (01%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Starship Battle (00%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Parachute Assault (00%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Electronics Systems (01%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy (01%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Pilot Atmospheric (00%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Fine Manipulation (05%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Streetwise (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Pilot Aerospace (00%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Forensics (00%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Tactic (01%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Pilot Spaceship (00%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Forgery (05%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Xeno-Archeology (01%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Scuba (00%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Hardware (_____) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Xeno-Biology–Ecology (01%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth (10%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Heavy Machine (01%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Xeno-Medicine (01%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Swim (25%) _____ %																										
<input type="checkbox"/> Sleight of Hand (05%) _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> Xeno-Zoology (01%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Throw (25%) _____ %																										
Sanity / Stability / Humanity																													
INSANE 0 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21																								Power Points					
22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46																								UNCONSCIOUS 0 01 02 03 04 05 06					
47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72																								07 08 09 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18					
73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98																								19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30					
																								FOCUS _____					

NEW HORIZON 5.6

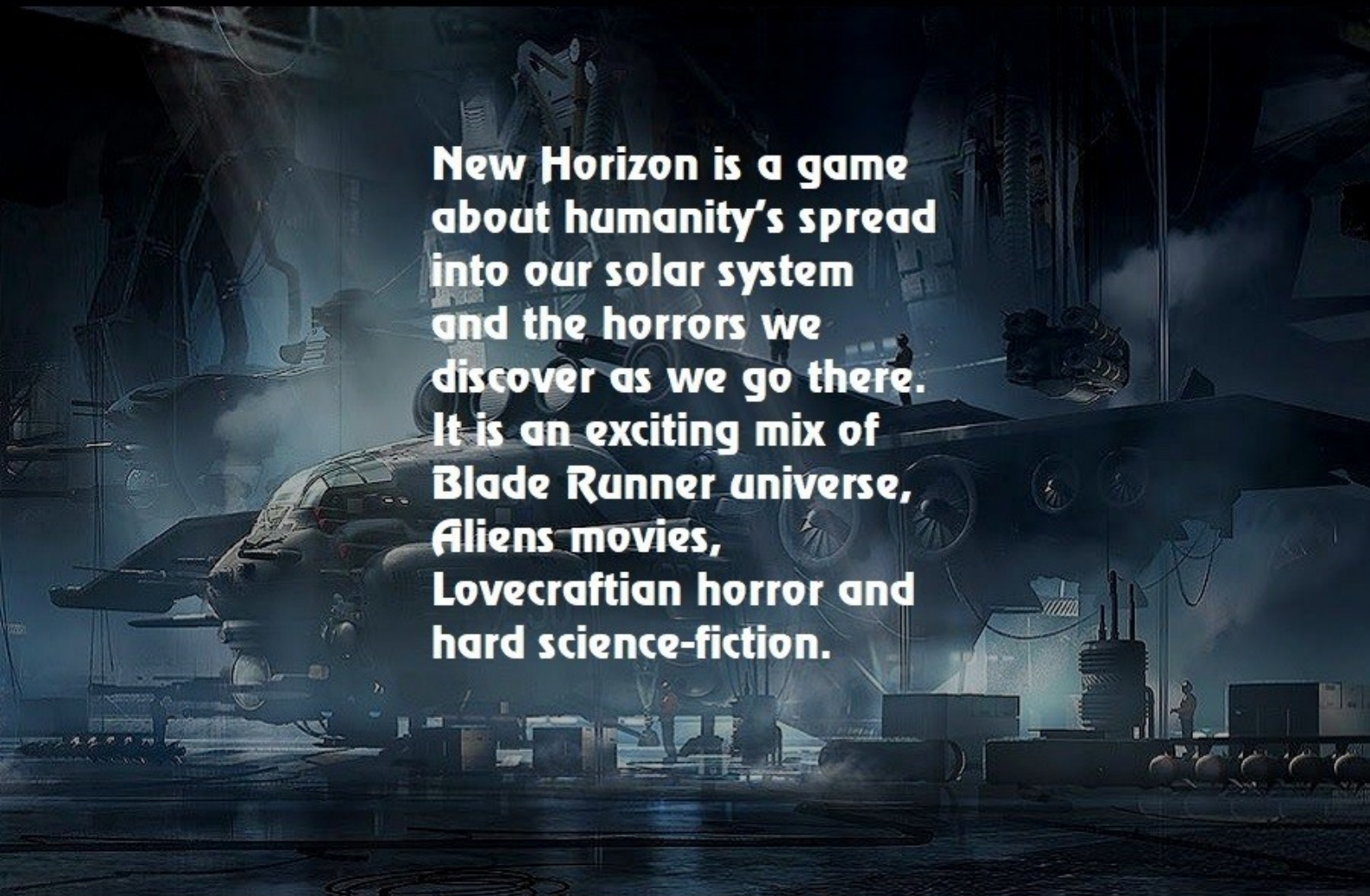
Melee Weapons							
Weapon type	Attack/Parry	damage	range	# attacks	length	hand	HP
☐ Fist (50%)	____ / ____ %	1D3+db	touch	1	close	1h	n/a
☐ Grapple (25%)	____ / ____ %	special	touch	1	close	2h	n/a
☐ Kick (25%)	____ / ____ %	1D6+db	touch	1	close	0	n/a
☐ Head (10%)	____ / ____ %	1D4+db	touch	1	close	0	n/a
☐ Brawl (25%)	____ / ____ %	1D3+db	touch	1	close	1h	n/a
☐ Garrote (15%)	____ / ____ %	1D6+db / round	touch	1	close	2h	n/a
☐	____ / ____ %						
☐	____ / ____ %						
☐	____ / ____ %						

Firearms							Armor	
Weapon type	weapon	ROF	damage	range	Ammo	Fail	Armor type	
<input type="checkbox"/> Handgun (20%)		_____ %					AP	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Shotgun (30%)		_____ %					ENC	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Rifle (10%)		_____ %					Rad. Shield	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Machine Gun (15%)		_____ %						
<input type="checkbox"/> Heavy Wpns (10%)		_____ %						
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy Wpns (10%)		_____ %						

Nanoware		Bioware		
Nanoware type	augmentation	Bioware type	augmentation	SAN

[illegible]

Luck								OUT OF LUCK		0	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	56	57	58	59	60	61
62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

A dark, industrial scene from the game New Horizon. The image shows a large, complex machine with multiple engines and a person standing on a platform. The scene is dimly lit, with a blue and grey color palette, creating a mysterious and somewhat ominous atmosphere. The machine appears to be a large-scale industrial or military vehicle, possibly a ship or a large land-based craft. The overall aesthetic is reminiscent of the Blade Runner universe, with a focus on advanced technology and a gritty, industrial setting.

New Horizon is a game about humanity's spread into our solar system and the horrors we discover as we go there. It is an exciting mix of Blade Runner universe, Aliens movies, Lovecraftian horror and hard science-fiction.



NEW HORIZON

Scenario Pack MV 2.0